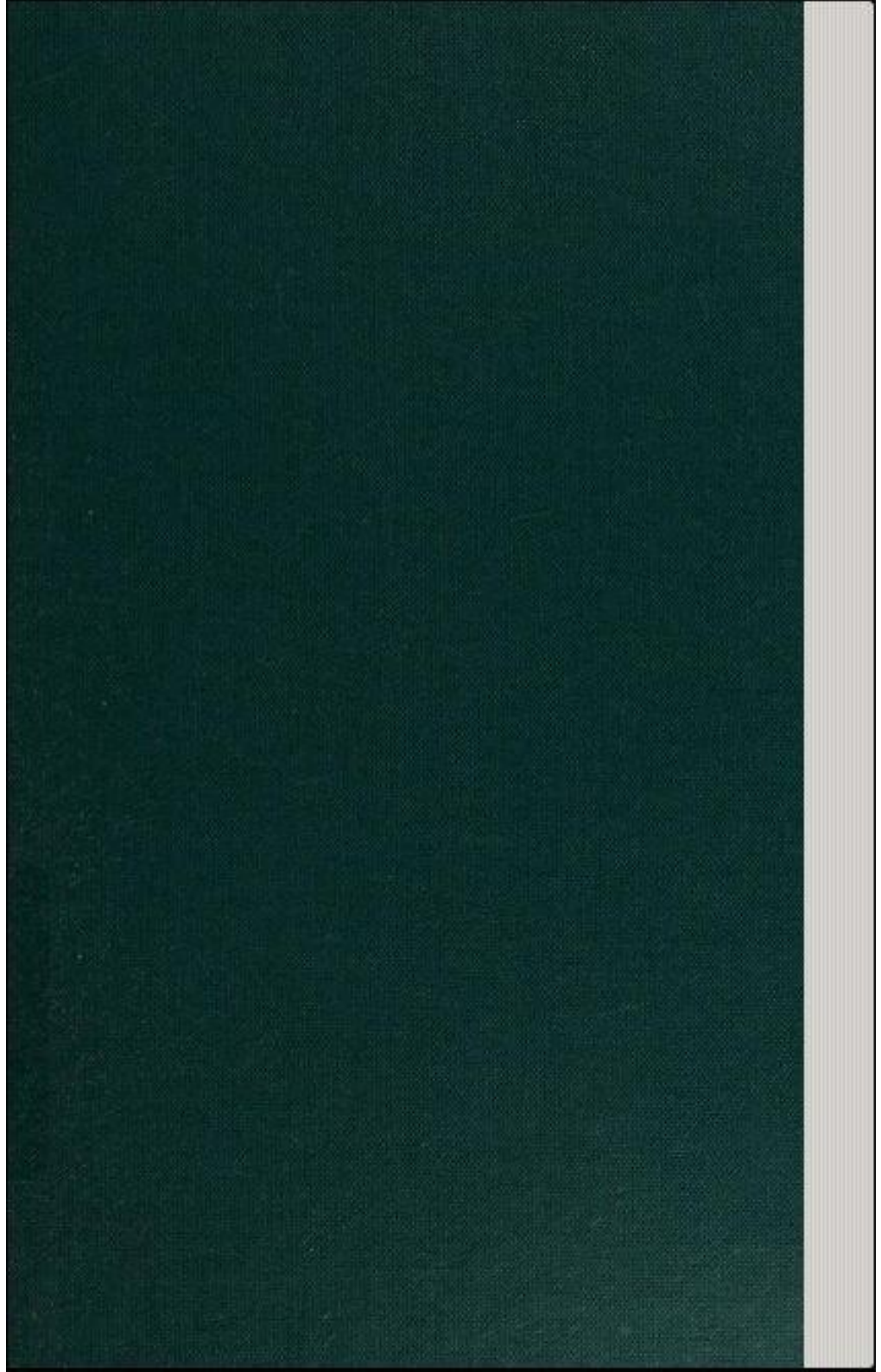

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THE ZOHAR

The Zohar

TRANSLATED BY MAURICE SIMON
AND
DR. PAUL P. LEVERTOFF

FIVE VOLUMES

IV

John W. English

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THE ZOHAR

TERUMAH (*contd.*)

Ex. XXV, 1–XXVII, 19

The companions now proceeded on their way, and by the time they reached the town it had grown dark. Said R. Simeon: 'As this day has shed light upon us while we were on our way, enabling us to make ourselves worthy of the world to come, so also will this night shed light upon us that we may through it become worthy of the world to come and crown the words of the day with those of the night in the presence of the Ancient of Days, for so perfect a day as this shall not occur again in all future generations. Happy indeed is our lot in this world, and happy in the world to come.' R. Simeon then repaired to his house, accompanied by R. Eleazar, R. Abba, and R. Jose. There they remained until midnight. Then R. Simeon said to the Companions: 'It is now time to crown the Holy Chariot which is above by our studies here below.' Then, turning to R. Jose, he said: 'Since no discourse from thee has been heard among us during the day, thou must now begin to illumine the night, for the time is now arrived in which it is auspicious and desirable that both higher and lower spheres should be illumined.'

R. Jose thereupon began to speak on the words: *The song of songs, which is Solomon's* (S.S. I, 1). Said he: 'This song King Solomon poured forth when the Temple was erected and all the worlds, above and below, had reached their perfect consummation. And although concerning the exact time of its singing there is some difference of opinion among the members of the Fellowship, we may be certain that it was not sung until that time of absolute completion, when the Moon—the Shekinah—came to her fulness and was revealed in the full perfection of her radiance, and when the Temple had been erected in the likeness of the Temple that is above. The Holy One, blessed be He, then experienced such joy as He had not known since the creation of the world. When Moses set up the Tabernacle in the wilderness, another such was raised in the heavenly spheres, as we learn

from the words: "And it came to pass . . . that *the* Tabernacle was reared up", the reference being to the other Tabernacle, to that which was above, namely the Tabernacle of the "Young Man", Metatron, and nothing greater. But when the first Temple was completed another Temple was erected at the same time, which was the centre for all the worlds, shedding radiance upon all things and giving light to all the spheres. Then the world was firmly established, and all the supernal casements were opened to pour forth light, and all the worlds experienced such joy as had never been known to them before, and celestial and terrestrial beings alike broke forth in song. And the song which they sang is the "Song of Songs", or, as we might render, "Song of the Singers", of those musicians who chant to the Holy One, blessed be He. [143*b*] King David sang "A song of degrees": King Solomon sang "the Song of Songs". Now what is the difference between the two ? Do we not interpret both titles to signify one and the same thing ? Verily, this is so, for both things are certainly one, but in the days of David all the singers of the spheres were not yet set in their rightful places to chant the praises of their King, because the Temple was not as yet in existence. For, as on earth, the Levitic singers are divided into groups, so is it likewise above, and the upper correspond to the lower. But not before the Temple was erected did they assume these their due places, and the lamp[1] which before gave no light began then to shed radiance abroad, and then this song was sung to the glory of the Supernal King,[2] the "King to whom peace belongs". This song is superior to all the hymns of praise which had ever been sung before. The day on which this hymn was revealed on earth was perfect in all things, and therefore the song is holy of holies.[3] It is written in the Book of Adam that on the day when the Temple would be erected the Patriarchs would awaken song both above and below. Not that they would sing themselves, but they would rouse to song those mighty singers who preside over all worlds. On that day, it is said, Jacob the "perfect" one arose and entered the Garden of

[1]*Malkuth*. [2]*Tifereth*. [3]"R. Akiba says: 'All the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is holy of holies'". T. B. Yadaim, III, 5.

Eden and caused it also to sing, and all the spices of the Garden likewise. He, therefore, it is who gave utterance to the song, since but for him the Garden would not have sung. This song comprises the whole Torah: it is a song in which those that are above and those that are below participate; a song formed in the likeness of the world above, which is the supernal Sabbath, a song through which the supernal Holy Name is crowned. Therefore it is holy of holies. Why so ? Because all its words are instinct with love and joy. This is because the "cup of blessing" was then given with the Right Hand; and when this is so all is joy and love; therefore all the words of the Song of Songs are perfected with love and with joy. When the Right Hand was drawn back (at the destruction of the Temple (Lam. II, 3)), the "cup of blessing" was placed in the Left Hand, and therefore those that were above and those that were below broke out in lamentation, saying: "Where is the 'cup of blessing' of the supernal place which was wont to abide therein ? It has been withdrawn and withheld from thee". Hence the Song of Songs, which emanated from the Right Side, is full of love and joy in all its words, but the Book of Lamentation, which marks the withdrawal of the Right Hand and the emergence of the Left, is full of complaint and lamentation. It may be asked, does not all joy and singing emanate from the Left Side, since the Levites who were the singers were from that side ? The answer is that all joy which issues from the Left Side is due to the union of the Left with the Right. When the Right Hand combines with the Left, then the joy which belongs to the Right mitigates the turbulence of the Left, and is infused into the Left. But when the Right Hand is not active, the wrathfulness of the Left increases, and there is no joy. Then the cry rises "*Ey kah*": "what will become of the 'Cup of Blessing' ?" It is retained in the Left Hand and the anger is hot and does not cool. No wonder, then, that there is lamentation and mourning. But the Song of Songs represents the "Cup of Blessing" when tendered by the Right Hand, and therefore all love and joy is found therein, as in no other song in the world. Therefore was this song aroused from the side of the Patriarchs.

'On the day when this song was revealed the Shekinah descended to earth, as it is written, "And the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud." Why ? Because "the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings VIII, 11). On that day this hymn was revealed, [144a] and Solomon sang in the power of the Holy Spirit this song wherein is to be found the summary of the whole Torah, of the whole work of Creation, of the mystery of the Patriarchs, of the story of the Egyptian exile, and the Exodus therefrom, and of the Song of the Sea. It is the quintessence of the Decalogue, of the Sinaitic covenant, of the significance of Israel's wanderings through the desert, until their arrival in the Promised Land and the building of the Temple. It contains the crowning of the Holy Name with love and joy, the prophecy of Israel's exile among the nations, of their redemption, of the resurrection of the dead, and of all else until that Day which is "Sabbath to the Lord". All that was, is, and shall be, is contained in it; and, indeed, even that which will take place on the "Seventh Day", which will be the "Lord's Sabbath", is indicated in this song. Therefore we are taught that he who recites a verse from the Song of Songs as a mere drinking song causes the Torah to dress in sackcloth and to complain before the Holy One, blessed be He: "Thy children have turned me into an amusement for a drinking bout." Yea, assuredly the Torah says this. Therefore it behoves the faithful to be wary, and to guard every word of the Song of Songs like a crown upon their heads. It may be asked, why, then, is the Song of Songs placed among the Hagiographa (which are not so sacred as the other two parts of Scripture) ? The answer is, because it is the Hymn of Praise sung by the Community of Israel at the time when she is crowned above. Therefore no other hymn is so pleasing to the Holy One as this.

'We have been taught that the three words, *Shir hashirim asher* (Song of Songs which) connote the placing of the "cup of blessing" between the Right Hand and the Left, and its raising towards "the King to whom peace belongs", grace being thus carried higher and higher to the mystery of the *En-Sof* (Infinite). Again, the four words of the title

correspond to the mystery of the perfect Holy Chariot (formed by the three patriarchs and David). Again, "song" stands for King David, the mover of song; "songs" for the Fathers, the high chiefs; "Solomon" for Him Who rides in this perfect Chariot.[1] This verse thus contains the inner meaning of the phrase, "from eternity to eternity", the mystery of the whole Faith. The whole is a perfect Chariot for That which is cognizable and That which is unknowable and which no one can apprehend. Therefore this verse was given in four words, containing the mystery of the complete Chariot as from four sides.

'Again, within this mystery there is another. We have been taught that if one sees grapes in a dream, if they be white, it is a good omen, but if they are black in colour, then, if the dream occur at a time when grapes are in season, they are of good significance, but if not, prayer is needed to avert the omen. Why this difference between white and black, between in season and out of season ? Again, it has been said, that one who dreams that he has eaten black grapes can be certain that he will enter the world to come. Why ? The clue is to be found in the tradition that the forbidden fruit which was eaten by Adam and Eve was the grape, the fruit of the vine,[2] for it is written: "their grapes are grapes of gall" (Deut. XXXII, 32)—namely, the black grapes. Thus of the two kinds of grapes, black and white, when seen in a dream, the white signify something good because they emanate from, and are the product of, the side of life, but the black emanate from the side of death, and therefore one who in a dream sees or eats of such grapes requires special intercession. Again, why do black grapes portend good if dreamt of when in season ? As we have already pointed out, when the dream is dreamed at the time when white grapes are in season naught but good is portended. Why so ? Because at that time the whole world is made fair and joyous when they predominate, and both white and black fit into the scheme of things; but when the white grapes are not in season, and so have no special power, then the dream-appearance of the black grapes is a sign that the judgement of death hangs over

[1] *Binah.* [2] Cf. Bereshith Rabbah, xv, 8.

the dreamer, and he needs to plead for mercy because he has beheld the fruit (lit. the tree) which caused Adam's sin, and in consequence of that sin death to himself and to the whole world. Here a problem arises which I would not mention were not the Master here. We have been taught that this world is formed on the pattern of the world above, and that whatever takes place in this earthly realm occurs also in the realm above. But when the serpent caused death to Adam in this world, what could have corresponded to that in the upper spheres? [144b] One might say that the serpent causes the light of the Moon—the female aspect of the Deity—to be diminished for a time, and this is a kind of death. But why did the male also die? Besides, even as to the "Moon" or feminine aspect, we have been taught that the diminishing of her light was not due to the Serpent but to another cause, because she complained against the sun.[1] Shall we say that her spouse shares the same fate? Can we imagine a defect in the highest? This is one of the mysteries of the Torah; but the Serpent did indeed cause a defect in all the worlds. Mark this. We have been taught that everything that the Holy One created, both above and below, He created in the mystery of male and female, and there is an infinity of grades in the supernal spheres, each differing from the other; and those grades which are of the same kind God framed and united in one "Body", in the mystery of the primordial Man. We have also been taught that on the second day of Creation, when the Gehenna was created, one body was formed in the mystery of Man, and those limbs that came near to the fire of Gehenna and were consumed returned to their original state, and this was because those limbs came near to that Serpent. This is the primordial Man who was enticed to the tent of the Serpent, and in this sense died, the Serpent causing him death because he came too near to him. Everywhere man is male and female, but the Holy Supernal Man rules over all and gives food and life to all. And withal this mighty Serpent withheld light from all. When it defiles the tabernacle the Female of that Man dies, and the Male dies and they return to their elemental state,

[1] c. Zohar, Gen., p. 20a; Midrash Rabbah, *ad loc.*

and in this way lower and upper correspond. "If he ate of the black grapes he can feel confident that he will enter the world to come", because he has (symbolically) prevailed over and destroyed that place, and since he has removed the stubborn "shell", he has drawn near to the world to come, and none will gainsay him. In the same way there could be no song in the house of David until the "black grapes" had been subdued and removed, and then Solomon sang the "Song of Songs", as already mentioned.

'This canticle is superior to all that preceded it; for those which were sung by Solomon's predecessors ascended only to join with the company of the songs chanted by the angels, as, for instance, the "Song of degrees to David", which means "the song which the celestial grades sing *to* David", to solicit nourishment from him; or again, as we might translate, "a song of degrees for the sake of David", the great king who always praises the Great King. But when Solomon came, he sang a song which is high above even that of David, a song which is the very same as that sung by the great ones of the realms above, the pillars of the universe, in honour of the Supernal King who is the lord of all peace and harmony. Other men send up praises by means of lower Chariots, but King Solomon by means of higher Chariots. It may be asked, What of Moses, who ascended further than all other men in the grade of prophecy and love of the Holy One, blessed be He? Did his song also reach no further than the lower Chariots? The song which Moses uttered did indeed ascend on high, but the truth is, that although it was not on a level with the Canticle of King Solomon, whom no man equalled in poetry, Moses' song was praise and thanksgiving to the Supernal King who redeemed Israel and wrought many signs and wonders for them, both in Egypt and at the Red Sea; but King David and Solomon his son sang [145a] with quite different purposes. David endeavoured to prepare the virgins (the celestial grades) and to adorn them for the Matrona's presence so that She and her maidens might be manifested in beauty and grace. When Solomon came he found that Matrona and the virgins thus adorned, so he in his turn aspired to lead the Bride to the Bridegroom. He

brought the Bridegroom to the place where beneath the marriage canopy the Bride awaited Him, and drew them together with words of love, that they might be united as One, in one perfection, in perfect love. Therefore Solomon produced a more sublime song than all other men. Moses, by building the Tabernacle, brought about the union of the Matrona with the world here below, Solomon brought about the perfect union of the Matrona with the Bridegroom above: he first led Him to the Canopy, and then brought them both down to this world and prepared a habitation for them in the Sanctuary which he built. It might be asked, How could Moses bring down the Shekinah alone? Would not this cause separation above? The answer is that the Holy One first caused the Shekinah to be united with Moses, and She became, as it were, Moses' bride, as has already been pointed out. As soon as She was united with Moses, She descended to this world and united Herself with it, and She became firmly established in this world, as never before. But no man since Adam was first created has ever brought about love and union above except King Solomon, who, as we have said, first prepared that union and then invited the Bridegroom and the Bride to the House which he prepared for them. Blessed are David and Solomon his son who have furthered the Supernal Union. Since the day when the Holy One said to the Moon, Go and make Thyself small, She was never again joined in perfect union with the Sun until Solomon came.

'*Shir hashirim asher lishlomoh*. Here are five grades which shall unite in the world to come: *shir* (song) is one; *hashirim* (songs) are two, which together make three; *asher* (which) is four; *lishlomoh* (Solomon's) is five. "Solomon" is in the fifth; for the fiftieth day is the mystery of the Jubilee. Mark now. Solomon would not have been able to bring about the union above had not union of the Shekinah with the world below been already completed in Her union with Moses; one could not have been without the other. All this is a supreme mystery, which yet is revealed to those of a wise heart. It is written concerning Solomon, that he "spake three thousand proverbs and his song was a thousand and five"

(1 Kings v, 12). This has been interpreted by the Companions to mean that every word that he uttered has three thousand allegorical meanings, as, for instance, his book Ecclesiastes (*Koheleth*), which has a profound esoteric meaning and is written in the fashion of an allegory. Verily, there is no word in this book which does not contain profound wisdom and allegorical significance, even unto the very least and smallest verse. R. Hamnuna the Ancient, for instance, when he came to the verse, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart . . . but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement" (Eccl. XI, 9), used to weep, saying: "Verily, this verse is fittingly taken as an allegory, and who can enlarge on it? If it is to be taken literally, it expresses no more than a fact which we see with our eyes; but if, on the other hand, the passage contains esoteric wisdom, who can apprehend it?" ' Then he corrected himself and said: 'It is written, "These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the young man was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (Gen. XXXVII, 2). The verse which we have just quoted from Ecclesiastes is an allegory on the esoteric meaning of this verse from the Pentateuch. "Rejoice, O young man," corresponds to "and the young man"; "and let thy heart cheer thee" to "was feeding the flock"; "in the days of thy youth" to "with the sons of Bilhah", etc.; "but know thou that for all these things" to "and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report"; "God will bring thee into judgement" corresponds to "These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph. . . ." Joseph was here included in Jacob. Who can fully grasp the secrets of the Torah? This allegory branches off into three thousand other allegories which are yet all comprised [145*b*] in this one, in which, as we see, Joseph was included in Jacob. The three thousand other veiled implications concern Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are, however, all indicated in this allegory of the mystery of wisdom which is revealed only to the faithful. Here, too, how

many pretended merchants are there, or serving men, who are really great men of learning ? So, too, there is no end to the hidden meanings of wisdom. Hence it says: "And his song was a thousand and five": that is, as we have interpreted, "the song of every proverb". However, whether the "his" refers to Solomon or to the proverb, it is all the same, since the one was the author of the other. The "song" refers to the "Song of Songs". But does this song actually consist of a thousand and five ? Assuredly ! The "five" refers to the five gates and doors which open toward the "King whose is the peace". They are the five hundred years of the Tree of Life, the fifty years of the Jubilee. The "thousand" refers to the Tree of Life as such, to the Bridegroom who goes out from its side and takes possession of the five gates, in order to draw nigh unto the Bride and claim Her. The Day of the Holy One, blessed be He, is a thousand years, and this number symbolizes also the River which goes out of Eden. Joseph was called "Righteous" after the Moon, the Shekinah, according to a special agreement between her and the Holy One. Therefore, the Song of Songs is holy of holies, and there is no verse in this Canticle which does not contain the mystery of the "thousand and five". There are five grades contained in the title, as we have said. But why is the "thousand" not indicated ? The truth is that this is hidden and will remain hidden until the Wife (the Shekinah) unites Herself with her Husband. Therefore Solomon endeavoured to bring that "Thousand" to the Bride in secret, by the aid of the mysterious ring whereon is engraved the seal of the supernal wisdom (cf. Targum on Eccl. 1, 7). As soon as he had completed the making of the Holy of Holies below, the mystery of the Holy of Holies above ascended and was hidden, so that the concealment of the Union might be complete above and below, according to the Divine purpose. "The Holy of Holies" above is the mystery of the Supernal Wisdom and Jubilee. Corresponding to this, the Bridegroom and the Bride inherit the inheritance of Father and Mother, but in a reversed manner. The inheritance of the Father passes to the Daughter in the ascension of the Holy Name, wherefore She is also called "Holy" and "Wisdom". The

possession of the Mother is inherited by the Son, and is called "the Holies", because He takes all those supernal holy attributes and gathers them up unto Himself, and then takes them to the Bride. Therefore it says: "Song of Songs": "Song" corresponding to the "Holy" and "Songs" to the "Holies", in order that both these aspects may be fused into one whole in manner due. "Which is Solomon's": as has been already pointed out, this refers to the King "whose is the peace". Yet think not that this praise is His, for it ascends to a still more supernal realm. The mystery is as follows. When the Masculine and the Feminine are united as one under the Highest King, then that Supernal King ascends and is filled with all the sanctifications and benedictions, and pours them down below, this being His great pleasure, to be filled with such sanctifications and benedictions and to pour them down below. Therefore the significance of all our prayers and praises is that by means of them the upper Fountain may be filled; for when it is so filled and attains completeness, then the universe below, and all that appertains thereto, is filled also and receives completeness from the completion which has been consummated in the upper sphere. The world below cannot, indeed, be in a state of harmony except it receive that peace and perfection from above, even as the moon has no light in herself, but shines with the reflected radiance of the sun. All our prayers and intercessions have this purpose, namely, that the region from whence light issues may be invigorated; for then from its reflection all below is supplied. This is the whole significance of Solomon's Canticle, that "the King to whom peace belongs" may be invigorated, for when that is so, all is invigorated from His reflected glory, but otherwise there is no remedy for the moon. [146a]

AND THIS IS THE HEAVE-OFFERING. We have been told that at the revelation on Mount Sinai, when the Torah was given to Israel in Ten Words, each Word became a voice, and every voice was divided into seventy voices, all of which shone and sparkled before the eyes of all Israel, so that they saw eye to eye the splendour of His Glory, as it is

written: "And all the people *saw* the voices" (Ex. xx, 18). Yea verily, they *saw*. The voice so formed warned each individual Israelite, saying: "Wilt thou accept me with all the commandments implicit in me?" To which the reply came: "Yes". Then the voice circled round his head once more, asking: "Wilt thou accept me with all the penalties attached to me in the Law?" And again he answered "Yes". Then the voice turned and kissed him on the mouth, as it is written: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (S.S. I, 2). And all that the Israelites saw then they beheld in one Light (the Shekinah) in which were focused all the other lights, and they yearned to possess it. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, unto them: "This light which ye have seen on Mount Sinai, in which all the colours of the other lights are combined, and which ye so desire, shall be yours: have it, take it unto yourselves!" And these colours which she combines are the gold, silver, brass, etc., mentioned here.[1]

'Another interpretation of "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" is as follows. What prompted King Solomon, when recording words of love between the Upper and the Lower world, to begin with the words, "Let him kiss me"? The reason is, as has been laid down, that no other love [146b] is like unto the ecstasy of the moment when spirit (*ruaḥ*=breath) cleaves to spirit in a kiss, more especially a kiss on the mouth, which is the well of spirit (breath) and its medium. When mouth meets mouth, spirits unite the one with the other, and become one—one love. In the Book of the first R. Humnuna the Ancient it is said of this sentence, "the kiss of love expands in four directions (*ruḥoth*), and these are unified in one, and this is part of the secret of Faith". The Four spirits ascend in four letters, these being the letters from which depends the Holy Name, and with it all things that are, both above and below. Also the hymning of the Song of Songs derives its meaning therefrom. And what are these four letters? *A H B H* (Love), which form a supernal chariot. They constitute the linking of all things into a perfect whole. These four letters are the four directions of the love and joy of all the limbs of the Body

[1] Gold symbolizing Severity, silver Grace, and brass Beauty.

without any sadness at all. Four directions are there in the kiss,[1] each one fulfilling itself in union with the other. And when two spirits thus become mutually interlocked they form two which are as one, and thus the four form one perfect whole. When they separate, there is formed from these four a certain offspring, a spirit formed of four spirits which ascends and splits the firmaments until it reaches a palace which is called the "Palace of Love", because all love is centred there; and therefore this spirit is also called "Love". When that spirit ascends to this Palace, it incites the Palace to attach itself to that which is above. As we have said, there are four letters which proceed in four directions, and they are the letters which spell the word Love. Their fruit is Love. When they unite, one is active towards one direction, another towards the opposite direction. First comes the letter *Aleph* (in *A H B H*). Then comes the letter *Hé*, which unites itself with the *Aleph* in love. From these two other letters issue *Beth* and *Hé*, and spirits are interlocked with spirits in love. Then the letters arise and float away in the breath of that spirit which ascended, and adorn themselves within it in the proper fashion. When love, thus consummated according to those four directions, ascends aloft, it meets with a celestial Chief who is appointed over one thousand nine hundred and ninety firmaments and over the outward flowing of the thirteen streams of pure balsam which descend from the mysterious supernal Dew. That outflow is called "Mighty Waters". This Chief tries to prevent the spirit from proceeding, but does not prevail, and it makes its way to the Palace of Love. Concerning this matter, Solomon speaks at the end of his Canticle, saying: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (S.S. VIII, 7). This refers to the supernal waters which we have just mentioned—those that descend from the Supernal Dew—and to the thirteen streams of pure balsam. The Chief of whom we have spoken is an angel sent forth by the Holy One, blessed be He. He is lord over many celestial hosts. He wreathes crowns for his Lord, and this is the significance of his name, *Akathriel* (God-crowning); for

[1] i.e. Four ways of combining the letters of the Holy Name.

he prepares crowns from the graven and inscribed Name *Y H V H J H* Zebaoth. When that love spirit enters the Palace of Love the love-yearning for the supernal kisses is aroused, those concerning which it is written: "And Jacob kissed Rachel" (Gen. XXIX, 11), so that the kisses of the supernal love are duly brought forth, and they are the beginning of the awakening of all supernal love, attachment and union. For this reason the Hymn begins with the words: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." Now who is "he"? He who is hidden within the supernal concealment. Can, then, the Most Recondite be the fount of kisses, and kiss that which is below? See now. The Most Recondite is beyond cognition, but reveals of Himself a tenuous and veiled brightness shining only along a narrow path which extends from Him, and this is the brightness that irradiates all. This is the starting-point of all esoteric mysteries, itself being unknowable. Or rather, it is sometimes indiscoverable, sometimes discoverable, but even were it wholly indiscoverable the impulse to the ascending of kisses still depends on it. And because He is veiled, the Canticle also begins with a veiled expression, "let him kiss me", to wit, Him who is veiled above. And with what [147a] shall he kiss? With that supernal Chariot from which all colours depend, and in which all are united. Therefore it says, "With the kisses of his mouth". "For thy love is better than wine" (lit. good from wine): this denotes the Sun which gives light to the Moon from the radiance of those supernal kisses, which He gathers up and passes on to the Moon. And from whence is that light derived? From the "preserved wine", from the "wine" which is the joy of all joys. And who is this Wine which gives life and joy to all? *Elohim Hayyim* (Living God). Also the "Wine of the Name *YHVH*", the joy of love and mercy, the source of all life and joy.'

The Companions then came and kissed R. Jose on his head. R. Simeon wept, and said: 'I know for a certainty that the Holy Spirit from above has made itself manifest here.' They all wept with joy, and he continued: 'Blessed is this generation! There will be none other like unto it until King Messiah shall appear, when the Torah shall be restored to

her ancient pride of place. Blessed are the righteous in this world and in the world to come!'

AND THIS IS THE HEAVE-OFFERING WHICH YE SHALL TAKE FROM THEM. Said R. Eleazar: 'This verse has been interpreted and the inner mystery thereof explained. But there is evidently a contradiction between the above verse (where it says "That they take *Me* a heave-offering") and this. First it says, "take Me"; then "take My heave-offering"; then "take from them". However, the whole meaning amounts to this: "Take Me (as) a heave-offering"—but who should take? The children of Israel. And from whom should they take? "From every man whose heart impells him", namely from the supernal angels above, upon whom this "Heave" (the Shekinah) is raised, those who do perpetually raise Her up to the Supernal King; and when Israel is worthy, they take Her from them and bring Her down. Who are those angels? The four who raise Her, and in whom the Heart (God) takes delight. Yet, though this "heave-offering" is borne aloft by them, "ye shall take" from them, in order to bring Her down to earth. How are they to do so, even in this dispensation? By the power of good works, prayer, and the keeping of the Law. But at the time when the Temple yet stood, it was by means of the colours that were manifested below, after the pattern of the colours above, through the sacrificial worship. Those colours drew down the *Terumah* (the Shekinah) to the lower spheres; that is to say, the colours which were below prevailed over those that were above, the former bringing down the latter, one entering into the other, the former becoming "bodies" for the latter. Therefore it says, "which ye shall take from them".

'GOLD, AND SILVER, ETC. "Gold" is included in Gabriel. The supernal gold is carried below by Gabriel, and seven kinds of gold separate themselves from it. "Silver" above is united with Michael below, and one rests on the other. "Brass" is also above; it originates from gold, because gold and five have the same symbolism. It is fire which brings forth brass, and from this power emanate supernal mysterious

serpents (*neḥashim* = *neḥosheth* = brass) and Seraphim brought forth by fire (from *saraph*, to burn). Therefore brass is golden, lit with orange and red, like fire. It is contained in *Noriel* (Fire of God) and forms his body. *Techeleth* (purple blue) is contained in both brass and gold, and derives energy from both sides. It possesses great strength and nothing can obtain dominion over it. It forms the throne of the power of judgement, and is therefore called "Boel" ("In him is El", i.e. God as Power), as it is written: "And El (God) is angry every day" (Ps. VII, 12). But when men turn back to God with perfect repentance, his name is changed into *Raphael* (God heals): for he brings healing to assuage the pains of that bitter judgement. [147*b*] In "purple-red" (*Argaman*) gold and silver are fused: Michael and Gabriel are intertwined with each other, and of this it is written: "He maketh peace among the dwellers on high" (Job XXV, 2). The two, being joined one with the other, become one body. There is "crimson" also above, contained in Uriel, like the former, to combine purple-blue and purple-red. Byssus also is above, contained, like the former, in the mystery of Raphael, in order that silver and gold may be united. So much for the mystery of the seven pillars[1] above which are contained in the seven that are below.

'Assuredly, there is shell within shell for protection, or rather, as we have said, brain within brain. Thus there is *goats' hair*, as the shell which guards the brain. "Rams' skins reddened" symbolizes the mail-clad lords with the flaming eyes[2]—"And his eyes as lamps of fire" (Dan. X, 6). They are called outer "firmaments" within the "shell". "Taḥash skins": these are powers which stand on the holy side but are not in union with it. As has been said above, Abraham begat a son by the "other" wife, whose name was Taḥash (Gen. XXII, 24), a brother of Ishmael by his mother; so, just as there is a celestial representative of Esau, so likewise is there one of Ishmael. Ishmael's mother begat Taḥash from Abraham. For, in spreading radiance on all things, the primordial light, as it shone forth on all sides, also shot forth

[1] i.e. the seven angels symbolized by the seven colours. [2] Angels of chastisement.

sparks. When it was established, God stored it away. For whom ? For the righteous. And why for them ? In order that it might bring forth fruit through and in them. And so it indeed was, for they did bring forth fruit in the world, for Abraham and Sarah "made souls" (Gen. XII, 5)[1], and as they made souls under the sign of holiness, so they also did under the sign of the "other side"; for, were it not for this impulse which Abraham implanted in the "other side", there would be no proselytes in the world. "Acacia wood" has already been explained as symbolizing the Seraphim, who "stand above it" (Isa. VI, 2); that is to say, above the Shell (*v. supra*). "Oil for the candle-stick." This symbolizes the supernal oil which emanates from above. It has two names: "The oil *of* the light" (Ex. XXXIX, 37), and the "oil *for* the light". The former is the one above; the latter the one below. The former never ceases to flow: it is always full of holiness and of blessing, and all lights and lamps are blessed and lit up from thence. The latter is sometimes full and sometimes otherwise. It is written: "And God made the two great lights: the great light to rule the day, and the small light to rule the night" (Gen. I, 16). This has been correctly interpreted by the Companions, but we may add the following. The "two great lights" refer to the "Oil *of* the light" and the "Oil *for* the light": the higher world and the lower world; the Masculine (Sun) and the Feminine (Moon), which, when they are manifested together, are both called by the masculine gender. Because the upper world is called "great", the lower world, which is united with it, is also called "great", but as soon as the above and the below part, and are separate, the one is called "great" and the other "small". Therefore the ancients said that "man should rather be a tail to lions than a head to foxes" (Pirke Aboth IV, 20). For the part bears the designation of the whole; since the tail of a lion is certainly lion, without any separation. Similarly, the head of a fox is still [148*a*] fox. Thus, as we see, it first calls both the Sun and the Moon "great lights", but when the Moon has separated Herself from the Sun she is called "small", even as to be head to a fox is less than to

[1] *v.* Zohar, Genesis, 79*a*.

be tail to a lion. Symbolically, therefore, the "oil *of* the Light" never ceases: it stands in the path of perpetual ascent, in order to rule by day, but the "oil *for* the light" is intermittent, and is called "small" on this account, and rules at night. The five materials of which the spices were composed (Ex. XXX, 34) were " for the anointing oil and for the incense". These two are really one with the "onyx stones", etc. Thus there are thirteen things connected with the construction of the Tabernacle. We may now revert to the former interpretation of their symbolism.

'It has been remarked that there are seven kinds of gold. Now, it might be thought that there is a mistake here, since gold denotes judgement and silver mercy, and yet gold appears to be reckoned as being above silver. There is, however, no mistake. Gold really does surpass all, but only that gold which is the seventh and the best of all the species of gold, and which is meant by the term "gold" here. It is the kind which shines and sparkles, dazzling the eyes, and he who gets hold of it hides it carefully. From it all other kinds emanate. And when is it called "gold" ? When its radiance rises in the awe-inspiring glory of supernal joy to waft back to those below a measure of this holy joy. When it stands for the sign of judgement it changes colour to blue, dark blue, and red—indicating severe judgement. But its essential character is joy, and it ever ascends with joy and trembling to the supernal regions and awakens joyousness. The silver below is connected with the mystery of the Right Arm, while the Supernal Head is symbolized by gold, as it is written: "Thou art the head of gold" (Dan. II, 38). And when does silver find its consummation ? When it is contained in gold, a mystery alluded to in the words, "Like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. XXV, 11). Thus silver comes back to gold, completing the circle. So there are indeed seven kinds of gold. Brass originates from gold, of which it is a degenerate form, and forms the Left Arm; purple-blue forms the Left Thigh; dark purple, included in the left, forms the Right Thigh. Byssus is the "River which issues forth" and which unifies all the six sides (*shesh* = *byssus* = *shesh* = six), and, as we have already pointed out, the

same thing obtains below. Thus with this river there are seven corresponding to the seven cycles of the "Jubilee", and the "seven" of the years of release (Deut. XV, 9). Although there are six they are thirteen through the seventh. Thus the thirteenth is the head, which stands on the whole body below, which is above all the limbs and is of gold. What, now, is the difference between the two kinds of gold ? The higher gold is in the symbol of the closed mystery, and its name is *Zahab sagur*, "shut-in-gold", that is, pure precious gold (1 Kings VI, 20, 21), shut off and hidden from all, concealed from the eye, which has no power over it, but the gold below is more revealed.'[1] [148b]

It is written: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light" (Gen. I, 3). Said R. Jose: 'That light was hidden and kept in store for the righteous in the world to come, as already stated; for it is written, "A light is sown for the righteous" (Ps. XCVII, 11). Thus that light functioned in the world only on the first day of Creation; after that it was hidden away and no longer seen.' Said R. Judah: 'Had it been hidden away altogether, [149a] the world would not have been able to exist for one moment. But it was only hidden like a seed which generates others, seeds and fruits, and the world is sustained by it. There is not a day that something does not emanate from that light to sustain all things, for it is with this that the Holy One nourishes the world. Moreover, whenever the Torah is studied by night, a little thread of this hidden light steals down and plays upon them that are absorbed in their study, wherefore it is written: "The Lord commandeth His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song is with me" (Ps. XLII, 9); this has already been expounded. On the day when the Tabernacle was set up on earth, what do we read concerning it ? "And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the

[1] This symbolism of metals evidently refers to the Sephirotic Tree, and it would require much space for the proper elucidation. What follows to the end of page 148b is merely a disconnected fragment of a longer section, dealing with priestly and prophetic offices of Moses, Aaron, Samuel, and Jeremiah, and the differences between them, touching on the symbolism of gold, silver, brass, and the brazen serpent.

congregation, because the cloud abode thereon" (Ex. XL, 35). What was that cloud ? It was a thread from the side of the primordial light, which, issuing forth joyously, entered the Shekinah and descended into the Tabernacle below. After the first day of Creation it was never again made fully manifest, but it performs a function, renewing daily the work of Creation.'

R. Jose was once deep in study, R. Isaac and R. Hezekiah being with him. Said R. Isaac: 'We are aware that the structure of the Tabernacle corresponds to the structure of heaven and earth. The Companions have given us just a taste of this mystery, but not enough for a real mouthful.' Said R. Jose: 'Let us take our difficulties to the holy lamp (R. Simeon), for he is able to prepare savoury dishes such as the Holy Ancient One, the most hidden of all secret beings, has prepared for him, and which require no added flavour from anyone else. From his dishes one can eat and drink, and sate oneself as with all the delicacies of the world, and leave over. Of him can it be said, "So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof according to the word of the Lord" (2 Kings IV, 44).' R. Jose continued: 'It is written: "And God gave Solomon wisdom as he promised him, and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and they two made a league together" (1 Kings V, 26). This verse has been expounded in more than one place. The expression, "And God" (*Va-Yhvh*) signifies agreement between the higher and lower spheres, namely, that He and His council are at one. "Gave wisdom", as one presents a gift to a beloved friend. "As He promised him"; that is to say, the gifts of wisdom, riches, peace and dominion. "And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon"; this indicates that they had a private code between them which other men did not understand. King Solomon realized that even in that most perfect of all generations it was not the will of the Supernal King that so much wisdom should be revealed by him, that the Torah which had hitherto been hidden should now be disclosed, because he opened a door to it. Hence, even though he did thus open the door, the full meaning of his words was yet undisclosed except to the wise, such as are worthy, and they,

too, could only fumble with them and not express them clearly. But, in this generation of R. Simeon, the Holy One, blessed be He, is willing that for his sake these hidden mysteries shall be revealed through him. Therefore I am amazed at the scholars of this generation, that they neglect even for a moment to seek the presence of R. Simeon in order to study with him, as long as he is permitted to stay with us in this world. Nevertheless, wisdom shall not vanish from the world in this generation. Alas, for that generation from which he shall be taken away ! The wise will then diminish and wisdom shall be forgotten.' Said R. Isaac: 'That is assuredly true. Once, when I was walking with him and he opened his mouth to expound the Torah, a pillar of cloud reaching from heaven to earth appeared and stood before us, and in it a great light shone, and I trembled exceedingly. Blessed is the man, I said, to whom in this world so much is vouchsafed. What is it that is written concerning Moses ? "And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the Tabernacle door; and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door" (Ex. XXXIII, 10). Such a vision was fitting for a teacher like Moses, the faithful prophet, the greatest of all the prophets, and for that generation which received the Torah on Mount Sinai, and which had seen signs and wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea. But in this generation it is the merit of R. Simeon alone that makes it possible for us to behold these wonders through him.' [149b]

AND PURPLE BLUE. Said R. Isaac: 'This colour is obtained from a fish of the Lake of Genessareth, which is in the territory of Zebulun. This colour had to appear in the Tabernacle for the following reason. It is written: "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Gen. I, 6). That firmament was created on the second day, because this creative act comes from the Left Side (separation), and on this day, too, was Gehenna created from the dross of the fire of the Left side. Now the sea was dyed with that purple blue colour which symbolizes the Throne of Judgement.

That day also received water from the Right Side, which nevertheless did not emerge till the second day, in order that one (attribute) might be combined with and reinforced by the other. The light of the first day of Creation was the first of all the six lights. It came from the side of fire, as it is written: "And the light of Israel shall be for a fire" (Isa. x, 17). That "light of Israel" emanated from the Right Side, and was (yet) contained in the fire. Now, the first of those six days is (symbolically) water, but it performed the function not of water but of light, which is from the side of fire, which is of the second day, to make manifest that the Holy One created the world on the foundation of peace, and that everything has grown out of peace. Thus the first day performed all its operations from the Side of the second, and the second operated from the Side of the first day. Each functioned with the work of the other, to show that one was merged in the other. The third day was a synthesis of both the first and the second; therefore it says concerning the third day of Creation "And God saw that it was good" twice (Gen. I, 10, 12). On this day the purple-blue was formed out of two other colours, red and black, the colours of the second day. The fiery red, which is the proper colour of the second day, is an attribute of *Elohim*, and it was assigned (in the Tabernacle) the colour of gold, which resembles it. When the red came down it plunged into the Sea, where it became dark blue, which is also an attribute of *Elohim*, but of an aspect less rigorous than the former. As for the black, it was formed as the residue of the original red when it came down below, for being as it were smelted, it formed round it a slimy element which was first an intense red, and finally was transformed into black. All these are transformations out of the primeval red; and all this was created on the second day and is designated "other gods". That black is so dark as to be almost indiscernible. The Holy Lamp put it this way. When the red was transformed into purple-blue, and the colours mixed, a scum was thrown off which sank to the depths and turned into mire and dirt, as it is written, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. LVII, 20). And

from that dirt of the Sea came that black which is dark, and not only dark but superlatively black—"Darkness upon the face of the deep" (Gen. I, 2). And why is it called "darkness"? Both because of its colour and because it darkens the face of Creation. It is both red and black, therefore it does not say of the second day of Creation, "And God saw that it was good". But have we not been taught that the words "And behold it was very good" (Gen. I, 31) include the Angel of Death? How, then, is it possible to say that it is because of him that it is not said of the second day that it was very good? Verily, herein is a mystery of mysteries. The Angel of Death is indeed good. Why so? Because, since all men know that one day they must die, many turn to repentance from fear of him before the Lord. Many fear the King because the lash looms before their eyes. Then is the lash indeed beneficial, making men good and virtuous and upright. Hence the Angel of Death is referred to as "very good". [150a]

'Concerning this mystery, the Holy Lamp (R. Simeon) gave us the following explanation: "And behold it was good" refers to the Angel of Life; "very" to the Angel of Death, for he is of greater importance. And why? When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, all was prepared for the coming of Man, who is the king of this world. Man was fashioned to walk in the straight way, as it is written: "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. VII, 29). He made him upright, but he gave himself over to corruption and was therefore driven out of the Garden of Eden. This Garden was planted by the Holy One, blessed be He, on the earth with the full Name (*YHVH Elohim*), and made an exact likeness of its prototype, the Paradise above, and all supernal forms were fashioned and shaped in it, and the cherubs were there—not those carved in gold or any material that could be fashioned by human hands, but of supernal light, fashioned and broidered through the agency of the perfect Name of the Holy One. All the images and forms of all things in this world were there fashioned, all having the similitude of the things in this world. And this place is the abode of holy

spirits, both of those that have come into this world, and also of those that have not yet come into this world. Those that are about to come are invested with garments and with faces and bodies like those in this world, and they gaze upon the glory of their Lord until the time comes for them to appear in the world. When they leave the Garden for that purpose, these spirits put off their celestial bodies and garments and take on the bodies and garments of this world; they henceforth make their abode in this world in the garments and bodies fashioned from the seed of procreation. So when the time comes for the spirit to leave this world again, it cannot do so until the Angel of Death has taken off the garment of this body. When that has been done, he again puts on that other garment in the Garden of Eden of which he had had to divest himself when he entered this world. And the whole joy of the spirit is in that celestial body. In it he rests and moves, and contemplates continually the supernal mysteries which, when he was in the earthly body, he could neither grasp nor understand. When the soul clothes herself with the garments of that world, what delights, what joys, she experiences ! And who caused the body to be inhabited by the spirit ? Why, he who took off the garment of flesh, the Angel of Death !

'God shows kindness to His creatures in not divesting them of their earthly garment until other garments, more precious and finer than these, are prepared for them. But the wicked, they who have never turned to their Lord with a perfect repentance—naked they came into this world, and naked they must return from it, and their souls go in shame to join the other souls in like plight, and they are judged in the earthly Gehenna by the fire from above. Some of them flutter upward after a time ; these are the souls of the sinners who had intended to repent, but died before they had carried out their intentions. These are judged first in Gehenna and then flutter upward. See how great is the mercy of the Holy One towards His creatures ! The most wicked sinner, if he have intended repentance, but dies without carrying out his resolve, is, it is true, punished for having gone out of this world without having repented, but his good intention is

not lost, but it ascends to the Supernal King and there remains until the Holy One, seeing it, prepares for that soul a place of refuge in "Sheol", where it twitters repentance. For the good intention issues from before the Holy One, and, breaking all the strong gates of the habitations of Gehenna, reaches at last the place where that sinner lies. It smites him and awakens in him again that intention which he had had on earth, [150b] causing the soul to struggle and ascend from the abode of Sheol. Truly, no good thought is ever lost from the remembrance of the Holy King. Therefore, blessed is he who nourishes good thoughts towards his Lord, for, even if he cannot put them into practice, the Holy One takes the will for the deed. This is the case with *good* thoughts. With evil thoughts, however, the will is not taken for the deed, save in the case of idolatry, as has been explained by the Companions. The wicked who had never given a thought to repentance go down to Sheol and never come out from thence, as it is written of them, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to sheol shall come up no more" (Job VII, 9). But, concerning those others who had intended to repent, it says, "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to sheol and bringeth up" (1 Sam. II, 6).'

Said R. Judah: 'Why are the sinners punished by the fire of Gehenna ? Because the fire of Gehenna, which burns day and night, corresponds to the hot passion of sinfulness in man. There was once a period when for some time sin ceased to rule because it had been thrown into the iron ring in the abyss of the Ocean. During that period the fire of Gehenna went out and did not burn at all. When sinfulness returned, and again began to burn in the hearts of sinners, the fire of Gehenna was started again, for it is the heat of sinful passion in the hearts of sinners that kindles and keeps alight the fires of Gehenna, causing them to burn day and night without ceasing. Gehenna has seven doors which open into seven habitations; and there are also seven types of sinners: evil-doers, worthless ones, sinners, the wicked, corrupters, mockers, and arrogant ones; and corresponding with them are the habitations in Gehenna, for each kind a particular

place, all according to grade. And over each habitation a special angel is appointed, all being under the direction of Duma, who has thousands and myriads of angels under him, to punish sinners according to their deserts. The fire of the Gehenna which is below comes from the Gehenna which is above, and is kindled by the heat of the sinners in whom the evil inclination burns, and there all the piles burn. In Gehenna there are certain places and grades called "Boiling filth", where the filth of the souls that have been polluted by the filth of this world accumulates. There these souls are purified by fire and made white, and then they ascend towards the heavenly regions. Their filth remains behind and the evil grades, called "Boiling filth", are appointed over that filth and the fire of Gehenna rules over it. There are certain sinners who pollute themselves over and over again by their own sins and are never purified. They die without repentance, having sinned themselves and caused others to sin, being stiff-necked and never showing contrition before the Lord while in this world; these are they who are condemned to remain for ever in this place of "boiling filth" and never leave it. Those who have corrupted their ways upon earth and recked not of the honour of their Lord in this world are condemned to remain there for all generations. On Sabbaths, New Moons, special seasons and festivals, the fire is extinguished there, and they have a respite from punishment, but, unlike sinners of a lesser degree who are accorded relief, they are not allowed to leave that place even on such days. As for those who, when on earth, profaned the Sabbath and the festivals, and recked not of the honour of their Lord, but openly profaned the holy days, these days, since they were not regarded in this world by these sinners, do not keep or guard them now in the other world; and so they have no rest.' Said R. Jose: 'Do not say this, for the truth is that there they are forced to keep the Sabbaths and festivals even against their will.' 'It is the heathen', rejoined R. Judah, 'who, not having been commanded to keep the Sabbath in this world, are there forced to keep it. Every Sabbath Eve, at the time of the sanctification of the day, heralds [151a] are sent to proclaim throughout the length

of Gehenna: "Cease from punishing the wicked! The Holy King is come; the Sabbath is about to be sanctified. He takes them all under His protection", and all chastisements cease and the wicked find rest for a space. But the fire of Gehenna never ceases to burn those souls who have never kept the Sabbath, and sinners there ask concerning them: "Wherein lies the difference between these and those? Why find these no rest?" And the lords of judgement make answer: "These are sinners who have denied the Holy One, blessed be He, and have broken the whole Law, because they kept not the Sabbath; therefore now have they no rest." Then all other kinds of sinners are allowed to come and see these, the tormented, for whom there is no rest. And a certain angel, named Santriel, goes away to fetch the body of such a sinner from the grave and brings it to Gehenna, holding it up before the eyes of all the sinners, that they may see how it has bred worms; and that soul has no rest in the fire of Gehenna. Then all the sinners of Gehenna swarm round it and call out: "This is such a one, a sinner, who regarded not the honour of his Lord! He denied the Holy One! He denied the whole Torah! Woe unto him! Better it were had he never been born that such punishment and disgrace should not have come upon him!" Concerning such it is written: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men, that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. LXVI, 24). "Their worm shall not die" refers to the body; "their fire shall not be quenched", to the soul; "an abhorring (*deraon*) unto all flesh"; that is to say, all the other sinners will say, "*de-raon*", we have *seen enough* of this horrible thing!' Said R. Jose: 'Quite true! For Sabbath is of equal importance with the whole Torah. The Torah is fire, therefore those who have broken it are doomed to be eternally burnt by the fire of Gehenna!' Said R. Judah; 'At the conclusion of the Sabbath that angel comes and takes back to the grave the worm-eaten body, and both the body and the soul are punished, each in its way. But this happens only when the body is still intact; if, on the other hand, it is decayed, it is not any longer

punished, for the Holy One "doth not stir up all his wrath" (Ps. LXXXIII, 38).

'All sinners, as long as their bodies in the graves are intact, with all their limbs, are judged body and soul together, each in its own way; but as soon as the body is decayed, the punishing of the soul ceases. Those souls that are destined to leave Gehenna now leave it; those that are to have rest now find it, and those who are destined to become dust under the feet of the righteous become dust, each according to its deserts. How excellent a thing it is, therefore, both for the righteous as well as for sinners, when their bodies are in close contact with the earth so that decay can set in quickly and their punishment may not be prolonged through the continued existence of the body; for there is not one of the righteous who can escape the judgement of the grave, for the angel appointed over the graves stands over the body and punishes it daily. And if the righteous have to undergo this judgement of the grave, how much more so the wicked! But when the body decays, the judgement ceases in both cases. The only exceptions are those saints who are the pillars of the world, who merit that their souls immediately after death should ascend forthwith to the regions appointed for them. They, however, are few. It is the Destroying Angel who brings death to all people, except those who die in the Holy Land, to whom death comes by the Angel of Mercy who holds sway there.' Said R. Isaac: 'This being the case, wherein lay the superiority of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, concerning whom it is written that they died "by the mouth of the Lord", meaning that their death was not brought about by the Destroying Angel?' R. Judah replied: [151b] 'Truly, the greatness of these three and their superiority over all others is demonstrated by this, that, although they met their death outside the Holy Land, they, unlike their contemporaries, were not brought to it by the Destroying Angel, but by the Holy One Himself. But in the Holy Land itself, all who die do not die by the hand of the Destroying Angel, because that is the domain of the Holy One; concerning this it is written: "Thy dead shall revive, my dead bodies (*nebelati*) shall rise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust" (Isa. XXVI, 19). "Thy dead" refers to those who die in the Holy Land, who belong to Him alone and to no other power, for the "other side" has no power at all there; they are "Thy dead", namely, those of the Holy One. "My dead bodies" refers to those who die outside the Holy Land by the power of the "destroyer", so they are called *nebelah*, "dead body", defiling those who touch it. For every animal not slaughtered according to the rule is called *nebelah*, because slaughter is from the "other side", and as soon as it is improperly carried out the "other side" rests on it, and it is therefore dubbed *nebelah*, i.e. shamefulness, wickedness, folly; its name describing its character. Therefore, wherever the "other side" has power, it is called *nebelah*, and those who die outside the Holy Land, being under its power, are therefore called "dead bodies". "Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust"; "dwell" means that they are there but for a short period, and are not really dead but asleep, and have only to be awakened. This refers to those who are "asleep" in Hebron (the Patriarchs); therefore the expression used of them is "expire" (*gawa*), as of one gone into a trance from which he can be recalled. Thus the four pairs, the Patriarchs and their wives, who lie in Hebron, are asleep and not dead: their bodies are all intact, just as when they lived on earth, and they know the hidden mysteries more than any living being. They were hidden there at the gates of Paradise, and they are referred to in the words "dwell in dust". Truly, those whose souls went out of them as they dwelt in the Holy Land did not die by the power of the "other side", which has no power there, but by the Angel of Mercy, under whose care the Holy Land is.

'There is a place[1] in the world where that "Destroyer" has no power at all, where he is not permitted to enter, and those who live there do not die until they have left the town. And why has the Angel of Destruction no power there? It cannot be because it is not his domain, since even in the Holy Land, which is subject to no alien sway, people die. Nor can it be because it is a holy place, because there is no place so holy as the Holy Land. Nor can it be that it is on

[1] Luz, cf. Bereshith Rabbah, 69.

account of the merits of its builder, for there have been many men of greater merit.' Said R. Isaac: 'I have not heard any explanation of this, so I shall say nothing.' So they repaired to R. Simeon and asked him concerning this matter. Said he: 'It is indeed true that the Angel of Death has no power over that place, and the Holy One does not wish that anyone should ever die there. Nor should you think that before the town was built people in that place died. Not so. For, from the very beginning of the world God appointed this place to be thus, and to those who would penetrate into the mystery of wisdom there is in this a mystery of mysteries. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He did so by means of the secret power of letters. The letters were shaken about before Him and He created the world by the tracing of the Holy Name. The letters presented themselves for participation in the world's creation in a variety of permutations.[1] The Holy One said it must end with *Yod*, and the letter *Teth* remained hanging alone in the air above that place (Luz). [152*a*] The light of the letter *Teth* is Life; therefore, anyone seeing this letter in a dream knows it is a good omen for him. Hence it is that death has no dominion over that place over which this letter hangs. When the Holy One desired the world to be firmly established, then took He a stone on which was engraved the mystery of the twenty-two letters of the Alphabet, and threw it into the waters. It drifted from place to place, but found nowhere to settle until it came to the Holy Land, and the waters followed it until it reached that spot where the Altar was to be established. There the stone sank, and the whole world was firmly established on it. It might be asked, if that place (Luz) is the place where life reigns, why was the Temple not built there, that it might give life also to those who dwell in Jerusalem ? The answer is, that in that place abides one letter only, but in the Temple are all the letters by which it was miraculously built, after the manner and in the likeness of the whole Universe. Besides, the Holy Land gives life and expiation to those who are in the other world, but Luz gives life only to those who are in this world. Hence the purpose

[1] v. Zohar, Gen., 204*a*.

of the Temple was to obtain forgiveness of the sins of Israel, to make it possible for them to inherit the world to come. Mark this. The letter *Teth* signifies in all places the light of life; therefore the word "good" (*tob*) begins with this letter. The Angel of Destruction, when he comes to this letter, must flee, or, rather, he has not the power to approach it at all. This letter is the reverse of the letter *Ḳoph*,[1] which finds no resting place in the whole world. Now, as *Teth* dominates this place, so does *Ḳoph* dominate Gehenna. In the book of R. Hamnuna the Ancient it is written concerning the two letters *Ḥeth* and *Teth* that they were not engraved upon the precious stones, those stones of perfection (on the High Priest's ephod), and the names of the Twelve Tribes inscribed on those stones do not contain these two letters, because together they would form the word *Ḥet'* (sin). All the letters of the Alphabet hang in engraved mysteries of the Holy Names in the Temple place; also Heaven and Earth, and all that is above and below; yea, the Holy Name itself is engraved there. So it was in the Tabernacle also, because "Bezalel possessed such great wisdom that he knew how to combine those letters of the Alphabet by which heaven and earth were created",[2] and so, on account of his great wisdom, the building of the Tabernacle was entrusted to him, and he was set apart from among all the children of Israel. And as one was set apart above, so the Holy One wished that he should be set apart also below. As the Lord said unto Moses: "Behold I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah" (Ex. XXI, 2), so did Moses say unto the children of Israel: "Behold the Lord hath called by name Bezalel", etc. (*Ibid.* XXV, 30). Therefore his name was Bezalel, i.e. *beẓel El*, "in the very shadow of God". And who is that one ? The Righteous, who sits in the shadow of Him whose name is "The Highest God" (*El elyon*). So this one holds a position below corresponding to that of *El* above: as *El* "took six sides", so did the Righteous take six sides ; as the *El* sends out light above, so does this Righteous shed light below; as that *El* is the synthesis of all the six dimensions, so is that Righteous. "The son of Uri"—the

[1] The first letter of *Ḳelalah*, curse. [2] T. B. Berakhoth, 55*a*.

son of primeval light (*or*), which the Holy One created in the time of Creation. "The son of Ḥur"—the son of absolute freedom (*ḥerut*); or "the son of the whitest (*ḥavra*) of all colours". And he is appropriately "of the tribe of Judah".

'As we have already pointed out, all colours seen in dreams signify good things, with the exception of purple-blue (*techeleth*), and that is because it symbolizes the Throne from which souls are judged. But has it not some white in it? Truly; but when the judgement takes place it appears to be only purple-blue, as we have [152*b*] said. The sight of that colour reminds a man that he must keep the commandments of his Lord. So it was with the Brazen Serpent in the wilderness: they who looked upon it were filled with awe and fear of the Holy One and kept themselves clear from sin, and therefore they were healed in that moment. And who was it that instilled in them fear of the Holy One? The instrument of punishment—that Serpent at which they so fixedly gazed. The same is true of "the thread of blue", that they were bidden to put upon the fringe of their garments (*Ẓiẓith*), concerning which it is written, "that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord" (Num. xv, 39). Therefore it was ordained that this colour should be in the Tabernacle.' Said R. Isaac: 'The Master has told us that this colour symbolizes the Throne when it becomes the seat of judgement. When, then, is it the seat of mercy?' R. Simeon replied: 'When the Cherubim turn their faces the one towards the other, and gaze each into the face of the other, then all colours are merged—purple-blue becomes something else, and green or blue is turned into white. With the changing of colours judgement was changed into mercy, or vice versa. And so with all other colours. All depends on the way in which Israel orders her prayers; hence it is written: "Israel in whom I will be glorified" (lit. beautified) (Isa. xlix, 3), to wit, in those colours which merge into one another and contain all beauty.'

AND THOU SHALT MAKE A TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD. R. Isaac began: 'It is written: "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God" (Deut.

viii, 10). How blessed are the Israelites, whom the Holy One has befriended above all nations and drawn near to Himself! It is for their sake that He nourished all nations; for, had it not been for them He would not have supplied the world with food. And now, when Israel is in exile, the Gentiles receive a double portion. When Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, the Holy One sent down food to them from a supernal region, the surplus of which was given to the heathen nations, but now it is just the reverse. He deals with them like a king with his servants. So long as the servants are obedient and loyal they are permitted to sit and eat with the king, and the remnants are thrown to the dogs; but when they are disobedient, and forget their loyal service, the king gives the food to the dogs and leaves them only the bones. The same is true of Israel: while they did the will of their Lord they ate from the King's table which He Himself had prepared for them, and they, out of the fullness of their joy, gave to the nations their surplus; but when Israel ceased to live according to the commands of their Lord they went into captivity and had to be content with that which the Gentiles left over. So it says: "Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them" (Ezek. iv, 13). Woe to the king's son, who is forced to wait at the servants' table to be fed upon the remnants! King David said: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (Ps. xxiii, 6). "Thou preparest a table": this is the meal of the king; "in the presence of mine enemies": this refers to the "dogs" who lie under the table waiting for the scraps while he sits with the king enjoying the meal: "Thou anointest my head with oil": this refers to the main part (the "head") of the meal, for all the rich oil and fat, and all the best portions of the food, are reserved for the king's friend, while that which is left is given to the scullions and the dogs. "My cup runneth over": the cup of the king's friend is ever filled up, even before he asks. The position of the children of Israel in regard to that of the Gentiles has ever been thus.'

R. Ḥiya once went to Tiberias to see R. Simeon, and

R. Jacob, the son of Idi, and R. Jesse the younger accompanied him. On the way R. Jesse said to R. Ḥiya: 'I find very surprising the words of the Scripture, "But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat of thy table" (1 Kings II, 7). Was this all the kindness that Solomon was to show him? Also it hardly accords with the dignity of a king that another person should eat with him [153a] at the same table. The king should sit alone at his table, and his ministers by themselves at another table, somewhat lower.' R. Ḥiya replied: 'I have not heard any explanation of the matter, and therefore shall not say anything.' Then R. Abba asked R. Jacob: 'Hast thou heard aught concerning it?' He answered: 'If you who sip daily the richness of the most excellent oil (R. Simeon) have not heard anything, how can you expect me to know?' Then he asked R. Jesse: 'And hast thou heard anything?' He replied: 'Although I am but young, and have but lately been admitted to your company, and had no great teachers before, yet I have heard an explanation.' He then began by quoting the verse: "Who giveth good to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. CXXXVI, 25). 'Why', said he, 'did David choose to end this great hymn of praise with this verse? Now there are three great channels above by which the Holy One, blessed be He, manifests Himself, which are His precious mystery: the brain,[1] the heart,[2] and the liver.[3] These organs act above in the opposite manner from those below. Above it is the head which first receives nourishment, which it sends on to the heart, which eventually passes it on to the liver, which again gives sustenance to the lower members in due proportion. Here below it is the liver which comes first, which transfers the nourishment to the heart, in such a manner that it is that organ which receives the finest portions; then, when the heart is strengthened, it passes the nourishment on to the brain; while to the other parts of the body the liver apportions the amounts necessary. On a fast-day, man sacrifices his food and drink to the supernal "Liver", and what is it that he thus sacrifices? His fatness, nourishing food, his blood, heart and soul; that "Liver"

[1] *Ḥokmah.* [2] *Tifereth.* [3] *Malkuth.*

accepts it gladly, and in turn offers it to the "Heart" that reigns over it; in turn the "Heart" offers it to the "Brain", which rules over the whole body; then the "Liver" apportions to all the lower parts their share. At another time it is the Brain which receives first and gives to the Heart, which, again, gives to the Liver and the Liver to all the lower members; and when it distributes nourishment to this world it gives first to the heart, which on earth is the king; for the king must naturally be fed first. Blessed is he who is found worthy to eat at the King's table, for thus does he come first in the enjoyment of the bounty from above! This, then, was the significance of that kindness which David showed to the sons of Barzillai. Not that anyone sits actually at the table of the king. But those who eat along with the king, and at the same time, are in his favour and are reckoned as sitting at the same table with him.' Then R. Ḥiya came forward, kissed him on the brow, and said: 'Young thou art, but profound wisdom dwells already in thine heart.' In the meantime they discovered that R. Hezekiah had arrived. R. Ḥiya turned to him and said: 'Of a surety, the Holy One, blessed be He, will join this our company, for new thoughts upon the Torah will find utterance among us.' They then sat down to eat, and agreed that each should give some exposition of the Torah during the meal. Said R. Jesse: 'This which we eat is but a light repast, and yet it is called a "meal", a meal in which the Holy One participates, and concerning which it is written: "This is the table that is before the Lord" (Ezek. XLI, 22); for the words of the Torah will gather about this place.'

R. Ḥiya then began to discourse on the text: *When thou hast eaten and art satisfied, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God* (Deut. VIII, 10). Said he: 'Should a man then bless the Lord only after he has filled his belly? [153b] Nay, even if one eats but a morsel and counts it as a meal, that is called eating to satisfaction; for it is written, "Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the wish (will) of every living thing" (Ps. CXLV, 16). It is not written: "Thou satisfiest with a substantial meal", but "the wish" or "the intention"; so it is not the quantity of food but the intention of the eater that

"satisfies"; therefore it is necessary that at all times when we eat we should offer up our thanks in order that there may be joy above.'

R. Hezekiah spoke on the same words, saying: 'From these words also it is possible to deduce the rules that an intoxicated person is allowed to say the grace after meals. With prayers it is otherwise, for prayers ascend very high to the realm where there is neither eating nor drinking, and therefore prayers are best said on an empty stomach. But in that realm to which the benediction after meals enters, there is, as it were, both "eating and drinking", and from it emanates nourishment for us below. Therefore it is necessary to exhibit before it satiety and joy in the expression of grace after meals.'

R. Jesse then spoke on the words: AND THOU SHALT MAKE A TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD. Said he: 'This table stood in the Tabernacle, and there rested upon it the blessing from above, and from it issued nourishment to the whole world. Not for a moment was that Table to remain empty, since blessing does not rest upon an empty place. Therefore it was that the shew-bread had always to be renewed upon it each Sabbath (Lev. XXIV, 8), in order that the blessing from above might always rest upon it, and that food and blessing, because of it, might emanate from that table to all the tables of the world. So, too, should every man's table be when he says grace after meals; in order that the blessing from above should rest upon it, it should not be empty, as the Companions have indicated in connection with the words of Elisha to the widow: "Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" (2 Kings IV, 2). A table at which there is no converse pertaining to the words of the Torah is one concerning which it is written, "For all (their) tables are full of vomit and filthiness, without a place" (Isa. XXVIII, 8), and at such a table it is forbidden to say the benediction. There are two kinds of tables: there is the kind that is prepared for the Holy One above, and at which it is ever fitting that the Torah should be discoursed upon and the letters of the words of the Torah should be gathered in—the table concerning which it is written: "This is the table that is before the Lord" (Ezek. XLI, 22). And there is the table which has no part in the Torah, or in the holiness thereof, and which is called "full of filthiness" [154a]—the table of "another god", which has no part in the mystery of the supernal God. That table, on the other hand, at which words of the Torah are spoken, is taken up by the Holy One, blessed be He, and becomes His own possession. Nay more, Suriya, the high angelic being, takes up all the holy words uttered at this table, and sets the form of it before the Holy One, and all the words, and the table also, are crowned before the Holy King, as is implied in the words "before the Lord". A man's table can purify him of all his sins. Blessed is the man whose table exhibits these two qualities—that from it words of the Torah ascend to the Holy One, and food goes forth to the poor. At the moment when such a table as this is being removed after the meal two angels appear, one at the right and one at the left. The one says: "This is a table belonging to the Holy King upon which such an one ordered his meal in His presence. May this table be continually full of supernal blessings, and may the Holy One pour upon it the richness of His bounty." And the other says: "This is a table of the Holy King which such an one had ordered before Him. It is blessed by those above and by those below. May it be set before the Ancient of Days both in this world and in the world to come." R. Abba, before the table was removed after a meal, was used to cover it up, saying: "Remove this table respectfully that it may not be put to shame before the King's messengers." A man's table, used rightly, secures for him participation in the bliss of the world to come, a sufficiency of nourishment in this world, and also additional power and excellency in the right place, and, withal, it causes him to be remembered favourably before the Ancient of Days. Happy the lot of such a man in this world and in the world to come.'

R. Jacob said: 'It is written, "And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam. X, 11). Said he: 'Was not Saul already the chosen of the Lord, as it says, "See whom the Lord

hath chosen" (*Ibid.* v. 24), i.e. already. Why, then, were they astonished that he prophesied? The reason was because the Holy One chose Saul to be a king, not a prophet; for no man ever, except Moses, was found worthy of combining the two functions of king and prophet. As to Samuel, he was certainly a prophet, as it says, "And all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet to the Lord", but besides being a prophet he was only a judge, not a king; otherwise the people would not have asked for a king. Therefore the people were astonished when Saul prophesied, because he had been chosen as king and not as prophet. If it should be asked, why, then, did the spirit of prophecy rest on him, the answer would be, that because the kingship is based on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he possessed the inspiration of prophecy before he became king; but as soon as he was made king, it was not the spirit of prophecy but the power to judge according to the truth that was bestowed upon him, and for which he had been chosen to be king. As long as he was among the prophets the spirit of prophecy rested on him, but when he left them, the spirit of prophecy departed from him. As for me, O that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit should come upon me, that I might be among the faithful prophets, the disciples of R. Simeon ben Yoḥai, before whom both supernals and terrestrials tremble in awe—and I that am now in your company stand in fear and trembling before you!'

Then he went on: ' "Thou shalt make a table." This table was here below for setting the shew-bread upon. Now, which was of greater import, the table or the bread? [154*b*] It might be thought that the bread was more important, since the table was needed to put the bread on, and besides, it was, in the very nature of things, beneath the bread. This, however, is not so: the table was the essential article, being, through its arrangement, the receptacle of blessing from above and of food for the whole universe. Indeed, from the secret influence of that Table emanated nourishment to the whole world, in proportion to the abundance poured out upon it from above. As for the bread, it was the fruit, the actual nourishment emanating from that Table, to show that the

universal nourishment emanated from it—for where there is no vineyard there are no grapes, and where there is no tree there can be no fruit. So the Table was the essential and the shew-bread was but the nourishment emanating from it. And the priests, from Sabbath to Sabbath, collected the fruit of the Table, to show that supernal nutriment emanated from the Table through the agency of that bread. And because the priests were permitted to eat the shew-bread, all the rest of their food and all that they drank was blessed, so that the "evil inclination" had no power to attack them—for, as a rule, the "evil inclination" is only present where there is much eating and drinking, as it is written: "Lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" (Prov. xxx, 9); since it is from eating and drinking that the evil inclination gathers strength in a man's body. The bread which was taken from the table in the Tabernacle caused blessing to descend upon all the other food consumed by the priests, so that the evil impulse might have no power to attack them, and they could carry out their ministrations to the Holy One with perfect devotion. For the priests this was most necessary. The table had to be set up at the northern end, as it is written, "And thou shalt put up the table at the north side" (Ex. xxvi, 35), because the awakening of joy proceeds from thence. The Left Side (North) always receives from the Right Side, and rouses the Female, and the Right Side then draws Her to Himself, and She unites with Him. Water, which symbolizes joy, proceeds from the Right, then it bestows itself upon the Left, and so it is that water unites with the Left, communicating to it joy. All this is symbolized by the ritual washing of the hands before meals: the vessel containing the water is taken in the right hand and poured on to the left, not from left to right. Therefore the Table, as we have said, was set on the north side, for there was more fruit there, since joy was awakened there first. This is expressed in the words: "His left hand under my head, and his right hand embraces me" (S.S. ii, 6). A man should sit down to table with a clean body, in order that God may be pleased with his meal and it may not be accounted "filth and refuse" for the impure side to reap any benefit therefrom.

When one has eaten and is satisfied, it is necessary to give the scraps and the dregs to the "other side", and any particles left upon the hands after a meal must be washed away so that the "other side" may receive its due. Therefore the washing of the hands after a meal is an imperative duty and the water must be poured away into the place of guilt (*ḥoba* = "duty" and "guilt"). Hence, no blessing is to be made over the washing of hands (after meals), since there can be no benediction in connection with that "side". So it is important that one should not give any of the food on the table to that "filth and vomit". The table in the Tabernacle was, as we have said, placed there in order that food should lie upon it and that nourishment should therefrom emanate to the whole world, and that is why [155a] it was not permitted to remain empty, even for one moment. The other, the impure table, the table of emptiness, could have no place in the sanctuary. In the same manner, the table over which a man pronounces blessings for food must not be empty, for blessing cannot rest on emptiness. The bread which was set upon the Table of the Holy One took the form of twelve loaves, and the symbolism of them has already been explained in connection with the mystery of the Countenance—for it was called "the bread of the Countenance" because all the nourishment and sustenance of the world emanated from this supernal Countenance. The "Bread of the Countenance" is the food of that "Countenance", and all the nourishment and plenty that the world contains emanates from that Countenance, and rests on that Table. And because the nourishment which it receives comes from that august Countenance, and from that self-same Countenance supplies all the others with sustenance, all of which was centred in that "bread", therefore was it put hot upon the table, and so, miraculously, was it also removed,[1] as has been inferred from the words "to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away" (1 Sam. XXI, 6). And man must cherish the mysteries connected with his table, in all these aspects of which we have spoken on account of that Table.'

R. Eleazar then discoursed on the verse, LET THY

[1] Cf. T. B. Hagigah, 26b.

GARMENTS BE ALWAYS WHITE, AND LET THY HEAD LACK NO OINTMENT (Eccl. IX, 8). 'This verse', said he, 'has been variously interpreted, but it may also be expounded thus. God created man in the mystery of Wisdom, and fashioned him with great art, and breathed into him the breath of life, so that he might know and comprehend the mysteries of wisdom, to apprehend the glory of his Lord; as it is written: "Everyone that is called by my name: for I have created (*beratiw*) him for my glory, I have formed (*yezartiw*) him, yea, I have made (*asitiw*) him" (Isa. XLIII, 7). "I have created him for my glory", literally, the inner meaning being that, as we have learnt, the glory of the holy Throne is fixed firmly and compactly in its place through the co-operation of the children of this world; that is, through the co-operation of righteous and saintly men, and those who know how to effect adjustments. So the words really mean: "I have created the world in order that, by means of their work, the righteous on earth may cause my glory to be established on mighty pillars to provide it with adornments and completion from below, that it may be exalted, through their merit." *Beriah* (creation, i.e. creative ideas) appertains to the left side; *Yezirah* (creative formation) appertains to the right side, as it is written, "Who formeth (*yozer*) light and createth (*bore*) darkness" (Isa. XLV, 7); while *'Asiyah* (making, finishing) lies between them, as it is written, "I make (*'ose*) peace and create evil: I the Lord do (*'ose*) all these things" (*Ibid.*), and again, "He maketh (*'ose*) peace in his high places" (Job XXV, 2). Hence, because man is on the earth, and it is incumbent on him to establish firmly My glory, I have provided him with the same supports as the supernal Glory: as in it there are "creation", "formation", and "making", so of man it is written, "I have created him, I have formed him, yea, I have made him." Thus man is after the pattern of that supernal Glory that he may confirm it and make it complete on all sides. Blessed is the man whose works entitle him to be regarded thus. Concerning this it is written: "Let thy garments be always white", etc. And, as the Supernal Glory has no lack of "holy ointment", from the mystery of the world to come, the man whose works are

"white" will not lack [155b] this "holy ointment". Through what does a man merit participation in that supernal joy? Through his table: yea, when at his table he has satisfied the wants of the poor; as it is written: "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul. . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord . . . ." (Isa. LVIII, 10–14). Such a man will the Holy One satisfy; he will anoint him with holy supernal "ointment", which ever streams upon that Supernal Glory.'

R. Jose and R. Ḥiya were walking together, and a certain merchant was walking behind them. Said R. Jose to R. Ḥiya: 'We must concentrate our thoughts upon the words of the Torah, for the Holy One goes before us, therefore it is time for us to do some service to Him on the way.' R. Ḥiya then began to speak on the words: *It is time to act for the Lord, for they have made void thy Torah* (Ps. CXIX, 126). He said: 'This verse has already been interpreted by the Companions, but the words may also be taken thus. "It is time to act for the Lord": whenever the Torah is observed and studied in the world, the Holy One, as it were, rejoices in His handiwork, and all the worlds which He has created, and the foundations of heaven and earth are consolidated; and what is more, He calleth into His presence the whole celestial family, saying unto them: "Behold my holy children on earth! Through their loving diligence is the Torah crowned in their midst. Behold those works of my hand of whom ye did say: "What is man that thou shouldst be mindful of him!" (Ps. VIII, 5).[1] And the celestial family, seeing the joy of the Lord in His people, begin to sing together: "And who is like thy people Israel, one nation on earth?" (2 Sam. VII, 23). When, however, the Israelites neglect the Torah, the very power of the Holy One is, as it were, weakened, as it is written: "The Rock that made him he (Israel) weakened" (Deut. XXXII, 15, according to an Haggadic interpretation), and then "all the hosts of heaven stand" (2 Chron. XVIII, 18) and accuse them. So "it is time to act for the Lord"; that is to say, the remnant of the righteous must gird up their loins and perform works of righteousness, so that in His

[1] v. Bereshith Rabba, ch. 8.

armies and in His hosts the Lord may gain strength, because the greater number of the people "have made void thy Torah", and mankind will not occupy themselves seriously with it.' Said the merchant who followed them: 'May I be allowed to put to you a question?' Said R. Jose: 'Verily, our path is made straight before us. Ask thy question.' Then said the man: 'Had it said "One must act", or "let us act", your explanation would have been fitting. But it says, "It is *time* to act". Besides, should it not have been "to act *before* the Lord"? Why does it say "*for* the Lord"?' Said R. Jose: 'In many ways is this journey of ours auspicious: one, that we were first two and now we are three, and the Shekinah is present with us; secondly, I thought that thou wert a withered trunk, but I see thou art a green olive tree; and lastly, because thou hast asked a good question. And since thou hast begun, continue!' The man accordingly then went on as follows: ' "It is time to act for the Lord for they have made void thy Torah." There are times and times—"a time to love and a time to hate" (Eccl. III, 8). There is a time which is above, the "time" which is a mystery of Faith, and this is called a "time of good will and grace". This always is the time for men to love the Lord, as it says: "Love the Lord thy God". But there is "another" time, the mystery of "other gods", a "time" which must be hated of man and its attraction guarded against. This is "the time to hate"; concerning which "time" it is written, "Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times unto the holy place (Lev. XVI, 2). The time when Israel diligently studies the Torah and keeps its commandments is the time that is within the mystery of the Holy Faith; it is fitly decked out and adorned with all its proper graces according to the eternal purpose. But the time when Israel neglects the Torah, making it void, is, as it were, a time of incompleteness, and has neither wholeness nor light. The verse is therefore to be interpreted: "There is a time which is still to be made or finished (*la'asot*), because at present it is incomplete, because Israel has made the Torah void"; for "time" is thus elevated or depressed according to the works of Israel.'

Then R. Jose and R. Ḥiya [156a] kissed him on the brow,

and R. Ḥiya said: 'Surely, we are not worthy that thou shouldst go behind us. Blessed is the road on which we were privileged to hear such words! Blessed is the generation which is contemporary with R. Simeon; for in it wisdom is found, even among the mountains!' The three then walked on, and the merchant said: 'It is written, *But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time (time of good will): O God, in the abundance of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation* (Ps. LXIX, 14), and we are taught that the time when the congregation is occupied with prayer is called the time of good will. This is certainly the case, for the congregation in this way prepare the supports for this time, so that it becomes a time of "good will", propitious for the offering of petitions. "As for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord." These words contain the mystery of Unity: "as for me" indicates King David, the realm called "Redemption" (the name of the Benediction which follows the *Shem'a*), and "my prayer" refers to the "Prayer" (the *'Amidah*), thus "joining the Redemption to the Prayer" without interruption,[1] because they are both unified in the "time of good will". This prayer is recited during the Sabbath afternoon prayer, and not on weekdays, because the afternoon prayer on weekdays is the time when severe judgement is in the ascendant, and is not a time of "good will"; but on Sabbath "anger" is absent, and all the attributes are harmoniously united, and judgement, though it is roused, is mitigated by mercy. Hence it is necessary to recite this verse of unification in order to harmonize all the grades. It was at the time of Sabbath afternoon prayer that Moses passed away from this world. That was a time of good will above and of sorrow below, and for this reason the gates were closed from the time of the Sabbath afternoon prayer until the end of the Sabbath. Which gates? The gates of the houses of study, and they were closed in order to show that with the passing away of Moses, the Faithful Shepherd, the study of the Torah, for the time being, ceased. At that time the house of study of Moses was closed, needless, then, to say all others. If they were closed, would one expect that

[1] Cf. T. B. Ber., 4*b*.

others should be open? If Moses' own Torah lamented over his death, who would not lament? For this reason are the gates of all the Houses of Study closed at this hour in perpetual memory of that sad occasion,[1] and it is necessary for worshippers to repeat the "justification of the (Divine) judgement" contained in the verse, "Thy righteousness is like the mighty mountains: thy judgements are a great deep" (Ps. XXXVI, 7). There were three who passed away from this world at the time of Sabbath afternoon prayer—Moses, the supreme, faithful prophet; Joseph the righteous; and King David. Therefore three "justifications of the judgement" are recited at this time:[2] the first refers to Joseph the righteous, and is contained in the words, "Thy righteousness is like a mighty mountain, thy judgements are a great deep" for Joseph singly was comparable to the high mountains and to the mighty deep (cf. Gen. XLIX, 25, 26). Then comes Moses, the faithful prophet, to whom refer the word: "Thy righteousness, O God, reaches the heights, who hast done great things" (Ps. LXXI, 19), because he grasped both sides, the right and the left. Then comes King David, to whom refer the words, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and thy law is the truth" (*Ibid.* CXIX, 142), for "everlasting" refers to David (cf. 2 Sam. VII, 16). Thus all was gathered in at that time, both the Written and the Oral Torahs, and therefore, at that time, the gates of the Torah were closed, and the gates of the whole world were also closed. When Joseph the righteous died, all the wells and springs were dried up, and the captivity (of Egypt) commenced for all the tribes. Then the celestial beings recited the verse: "Thy righteousness is like the mighty mountains", etc. On the death of Moses, the sun in his splendour was darkened and the Written Torah was locked up, that light of the luminous mirror. The Moon withdrew her light when King David died, [156*b*] and the Oral Torah ceased to shine. Since that time the lights of the Torah have remained hidden, and controversy has increased over the Mishnah (i.e. the traditional Law), and the wise men dispute, and all the great thinkers are in confusion, so

[1] *v.* Tosefoth to Menahoth, 30*a*. [2] i.e. the Sabbath afternoon service, *v.* Prayer Book.

that to succeeding generations the joy of the Torah has been lost. When a great man dies the scholars proclaim a fast. Seeing, then, that the joy of the Written and Oral Torahs was gathered in at this hour, is it not fitting that the gates of the Torah should close then? This, then, is the reason why we repeat the three "justifications of judgement", as explained.'

R. Jose and R. Ḥiya rejoiced at his words and kissed him again, saying: 'Happy indeed is our lot on this path!' The stranger again spoke, taking as his text the verse: *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten potentates which are in the city* (Eccl. XII, 19). 'This', he said, 'refers to Moses. When he went up into Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, all those firmaments, and all those supernal hosts, began to tremble and spake unto the Lord of the Universe, saying: "Is not all our bliss and all our joy based on the Torah, and art Thou minded to send her down to earth?" And they gathered round Moses in order to consume him with fire, but Moses prevailed over them all, as the scholars have already set forth;[1] but there is more yet to be said. The man who gives himself up with ardour and diligence to the study of the Torah for her own sake will find in her a strong protection in time of need. From what region is it that he gains this strength? From the "ten rulers", the Ten Words of Creation which are written in the Torah, for these are supernal "potentates" by means of which man is strengthened both in this world and in the world to come. All mysteries, all commandments, and all wisdom, concerning both the higher and the lower, are dependent on them; all are included in them, and all is in the Torah. Blessed is the man who is occupied continually with the Torah, that through her he may gain power for the world to come. The "ten potentates" are also the ten aspects of Wisdom which are found in the Torah, contained in ten (Divine) Names, all included in one Name of twenty-two letters (of the Hebrew alphabet). Those mysteries of the world to come are imprinted in light such as no eye can look upon, nor can our imagination comprehend the measure of joy and delight

[1] v. T. B. Shabb., 88b.

which the Holy One, blessed be He, has in store for the righteous in the world to come, as it is written, "No eye hath seen it, O God, apart from thee, who has made it for those who wait for him" (Isa. LXIV, 4). Man's table enables him to attain to the delight of that other table: "he eats always at the king's table" (2 Sam. IX, 13), and as King David said, "Thou preparest a table before me" (Ps. XXIII, 4), which refers to the preparation of the Table in the other world for those from below; for this is the joy and delight of the soul in the world to come. But is there a table set for the souls in the world to come? Verily there is! In that world they eat of such food and with such satisfaction as the angels enjoy. And do the angels eat? Verily they do! Such as theirs was the food upon which the Israelites were fed in the wilderness. This food is symbolical of the Dew which emanates from above, from the mystery of the world to come. It is the food of the light of the oil of holy anointing; from it the righteous in the Garden of Eden derive their sustenance and are replete with joy. For in the Garden of Eden which is below the souls of the righteous put on a form which is like unto that which they had worn in this world; but on Sabbaths and holy days they put off this form like a garment and ascend to those heavenly regions where they may behold the Lord in His Glory, and where they may fully enjoy the supernal delights. Concerning this it is written: "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isa. LXVI, 23). Is it "flesh", then, that will come? Ought it not to be written, "all spirits", or "all souls"? But the fact is that the Holy One created man in this world after the pattern of the supernal Glory above. This supernal Glory expands itself into spirit after spirit, and soul after soul, [157a] until it reaches a region which it called "Body"[1] and into this "Body" the spirit from the Fountain of Life enters that is called "All"; for all the good and all the satisfaction and nourishment of the "Body" is in it. There is an allusion to this in the words: "Moreover, the advantage of the earth is in all" (Eccl. V, 9)—which "all"

[1] *Malkuth.*

refers to the spirit of that "Body". Similarly, man in this world consists of a body, and the spirit which dominates it is in the likeness of that supernal Spirit which is called "All" and which rules over the "Body" above, and this is designated "all flesh"; therefore does it say: "all flesh shall come", and concerning that joy it is written, "No eye hath seen", etc.'

The Companions went on the way rejoicing, and when they had come to a certain mountain R. Hiya turned to the traveller and asked: 'What, then, is thy name?' He replied: '*Hanan*' (Merciful). Said R. Hiya: 'May the Holy One be merciful to thee indeed, and hearken to thy voice when thou art in distress.' Said R. Jose: 'The sun is setting; behind this mountain there lies the village of Kephar Hanan. Let us thither and spend the night there to honour thy name.' On their arrival they entered an inn where a table was prepared for them with many viands. Said R. Hiya: 'Verily, this table has such a likeness to that of the world above, that it is meet for us to dignify and crown it with the words of the Torah.'

R. Jose began: 'It is written, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee" (Deut. VIII, 10). It is evident from this verse that grace after meals is a duty in the Land of Israel; but whence do we know that it is a duty in other lands also? Now, when the Holy One created the world, He divided it into two parts: one part that should be habitable and the other a desert, the former on one side and the latter at the other. Then He redivided the habitable part in such a manner that it formed a circle, the centre of which is the Holy Land. The centre of the Holy Land is Jerusalem, and, again, the centre of Jerusalem is the Holy of Holies, to which all the abundance of nourishment and all good things for the whole inhabited world flow in from above, and there is no place in this inhabited world that is not nourished and sustained from that source. The desert land He also divided, and there is no desert in the world so terrible and sinister as that where for forty long years Israel wandered, before its power was destroyed, of which it is written: "Who led thee

through that great and terrible wilderness" (Deut. XIII, 15). There the "other side" reigned, and the children of Israel in despite of it traversed the desert forty years long, to break its power. Had they throughout that long period been worthy in heart and served the Holy One with faithfulness, the "other side" would have been wiped off the face of the earth; but they, time after time, provoked the Holy One to anger, and in like measure did the "other side" prevail, so that they became subject to its power. It might be remarked, "How came it, then, that Moses, who was the most worthy and faithful of all men, died there?" The answer would be: "Not so; the faithful Moses was not in the power of the "other side", for he died in Abarim (lit. quarrels. Deut. XXXII, 49). It was so called because the celestial principalities competed in wrath for it, but it was not given over to any of them, but was left as it was till Moses came and took possession of it, and there he was buried, and the Holy One alone attended to his burial and no one else, since it is written: "And (he) buried him in a valley" (*Ibid.* XXXIV, 6), without mention of a subject. Therefore Moses ruled alone over that place, and there was he buried, and in order to let all future generations know that those who died in the wilderness will rise again, He let their faithful shepherd abide among them, so that at the awakening of the resurrection in the world to come they may find themselves all together. It may be asked, If that wilderness consisted of what was left over from the power of the "other side", why did the Holy One command that the goat of the Day of Atonement should be sent to a mountain called *Azazel* (Lev. XVI, 8, 10, 26), and not to [157b] a mountain in that wilderness in which Israel had sojourned? The answer is that the sojourn of the Israelites in that wilderness for forty years had broken its power, while, again, its power increased in a region where human feet had not ever trodden. And the mountain to which the goat was sent is a great and mighty rock, and below it are depths unplumbable, where man has never trodden. There the "other side" has power enough to consume his prey undisturbed, so that he leaves Israel alone and there is no one to bring accusations against them. The domain of the mystery

of the Faith is in that very central point of the Holy Land which is in the Holy of Holies, the place where the Shekinah dwelt, and even though She dwells there no longer, and the Holy of Holies exists no more, yet for Her sake the whole world is still supplied with food, and nourishment and satisfaction ever stream forth, emanating from thence to all the inhabited regions of the world. Therefore, although Israel lives at present outside the Holy Land, yet it is owing to the power and worth of that Land that the world is supplied with food and subsistence. It is concerning this that it is written: "Thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee" (Deut. VIII, 10). Truly "the good land", since for its sake there is a sufficiency of nourishment for the whole world. When a man sits at his table and partakes of its plenty with joyous thanksgiving, he should at the same time let his mind dwell with sadness upon the holiness of that Land and of the Temple of the King which has been destroyed, and because of his sadness there, at the table, in the midst of his feasting, God regards him as a restorer of the House of the Holy One, and all the ruins of the Holy Temple. Happy is his lot!

"The Cup of Benediction (the cup of wine taken immediately after Grace has been recited at the conclusion of a meal) is only partaken of when there are (at least) three persons present at the table, because it is blessed through the mystery of the three Patriarchs. The cup must first be lifted by both hands, in order that it should be placed between the right and left grades, but afterwards it is left in the right alone, because it is blessed from that side. There have been ten things enumerated in connection with the Cup of Benediction, which is quite appropriate, since there are ten aspects of it, as the Companions have pointed out. It is necessary to look at the cup while reciting the benediction, because it is written, "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it" (i.e. the Holy Land, Deut. XI, 12); therefore the thoughts must not be allowed to stray from the cup, but the eyes must be firmly fixed upon it. The Cup of Benediction is blessed by the very benediction which man pronounces over it to the Holy One, blessed be He, because it is the mystery of Faith,

and therefore man must guard it with the utmost care, as the very essence of the King's Majesty, since for its sake is the table blessed. Also, when grace is recited, the table must not be empty, since "no blessing can rest on an empty table", as has been pointed out with reference to the words, "Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" (2 Kings IV, 2); in a word, the heavenly blessings come to rest only on a place that is complete. Esoterically this is expressed in the words: "In the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom" (Ex. XXI, 6, i.e. "he who hath, to him it shall be given"), and also in the words, "He giveth wisdom to the wise" (Dan. II, 21). The symbol for all this is the table of the "Bread of the Countenance", for it is written: "And thou shalt set upon the table bread of the Countenance before me alway" (Ex. XXV, 30)."[1] [159a]

AND LOOK THAT THOU MAKE THEM AFTER THEIR PATTERN WHICH WAS SHEWED THEE IN THE MOUNT. And again it is written: "And thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount" (Ex. XXVI, 30). R. Jose said: 'From this we see that the Holy One, blessed be He, actually gave Moses all the arrangements and all the shapes of the Tabernacle, each in its appropriate manner, and that he saw Metatron ministering to the High Priest within it. It may be said that, as the Tabernacle above was not erected until the Tabernacle below had been completed, that "youth" (Metatron) could not have served above before Divine worship had taken place in the earthly Tabernacle. It is true that the Tabernacle above was not actually erected before the one below; yet Moses saw a mirroring of the whole beforehand, and also Metatron, as he would be later when all was complete. The Holy One said to him: "Behold now, the Tabernacle and the 'Youth'; all is held in suspense until the Tabernacle below shall have been built." It should not be thought, however, that Metatron himself ministers; the fact is, that the Tabernacle belongs to him, and Michael, the High Priest, it is that serves there, within the Metatron's Tabernacle,

[1] From here to 159a belongs to Ra'ya Mehemna.

mirroring the function of the Supernal High Priest above, serving within that other Tabernacle, that hidden one which never is revealed, which is connected with the mystery of the world to come. There are two celestial Tabernacles: the one, the supernal concealed Tabernacle, and the other, the Tabernacle of the Metatron. And there are also two priests: the one is the primeval Light, and the other Michael, the High Priest below.'[1] [160b]

R. Hiya and R. Jose were walking together. Said R. Jose: 'Let us now think on spiritual matters and talk on the words of the Torah.' He thereupon began by pointing out that three passages are introduced by the words, *Hear, O Israel*. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deut. VI, 4); "Hear, O Israel, this day thou hast become a people to the Lord thy God" (*Ibid.* XXVII, 9); and "Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass the Jordan this day" (*Ibid.* IX, 1). 'Why', he said, 'did Moses commence in each of these cases with the word "hear"? In the first, indeed, the word seems appropriate, but what is its point in the other two cases? The truth is that in all three passages it is meant to teach a special lesson. This is obvious in the case of the first, where the word "hear" indicates the unity in the supernal Wisdom of what is above and what is below. The word *Shema'* consists of *shem* (name) and *'ain* (seventy), indicating the combination of this Name and the other seventy from whence it derives blessing. At the recitation of the *Shema'*, therefore, one must concentrate attention on this union of all the Divine names. For these seventy Names constitute the mystery of the supernal Chariot from whence that Name receives blessing and in which it is contained. Then comes the word *Israel*, referring, as we have learnt, to "Ancient Israel" (*Tifereth*), so that this emanation may also be included. So "Hear, O Israel," signifies the union of the Spouse with her Husband (i.e. *Malkuth* with *Tifereth*), so that all is in all, and all is one. As to the "hear" in the other two passages, it also has a special significance, though not so profound as in the first.

[1] The passage which follows, to the beginning of 160b, deals with the symbolism of some letters and their significance as creative potencies, and does not lend itself to translation.

"Hear, O Israel, this day thou hast become (*nihyeta*) a people". Why is not the usual form of the verb, *hayita*, used? To indicate that the Israelites are called "people" when their hearts are broken in order that they may worship the Lord, the word *nihyeta* having the same significance as in the verse, "And I Daniel was ended (*nihyeti*, i.e. fainted) and was sick . . . afterwards I rose up and did the King's business" (Dan. VIII, 27). Similarly, David said: "Hear me, my brethren and my people" (1 Chron. XXVIII, 2), meaning, "If ye serve me of your own free will, ye are my brethren; but if not, ye are my people (i.e. subjects), to have your own will broken in order to serve me." The third passage is also on a lower plane. Neither of these two has the same significance as that which expresses the Unity and the acceptance by Israel of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven throughout all spheres, since, at the time of the recitation of the Shema, a man has to be prepared to proclaim the unity of the Divine Name and to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. On the head of him who thus recites the Shema, to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Shekinah rests—a witness to testify of him before the Holy King that twice daily does he declare the Unity of the Name, and thus, consciously, unite the Above and the Below. Therefore is the letter *'ain* of the Shema written large, and also the *daleth*, of the *eḥad* (one), which, when put together, make the word *'ed* (witness): a witness before the Holy King. The mystery contained in the words, "The Lord our God, the Lord", the mystery of the Unity in three aspects (lit. "in three sides"), has often been referred to by the Holy Lamp (R. Simeon), and we are not permitted to enlarge upon what he has said. However, certain it is, that upon the head of the man who unifies [161a] the Name of the Holy One above and below, the Shekinah descends to rest, and to bless him with seven blessings, and to proclaim concerning him: "Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3).'

R. Hiya then followed with an exposition of the verse: *Thou hast been shown (har'eta) to know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him* (Deut. IV, 35). 'What does this peculiar expression, "thou hast been shown to know",

denote ? When the Israelites came out of Egypt, at first they knew nothing of the true meaning of faith in the Holy One, blessed be He, because, while they were in captivity in Egypt, they had worshipped foreign gods and had forgotten the essentials of the Faith, that legacy which the Twelve Tribes had received from Father Jacob. So, when Moses came, he had to teach them that in the universe there is a supreme God. Then they were witnesses of all the signs and wonders connected with the crossing of the Red Sea, and more than that, of all the wonders that took place in Egypt itself before it; then, later, they experienced the mighty acts of God in connection with the manna and the water in the wilderness. And by and by the Torah was given to them, and, gradually, they learned the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, until eventually they reached that point when the words quoted were said unto them. Moses said, in effect: "Till now I had to teach you as little children are taught"; thou "hast been shown to know", and thou hast learnt by now to know and penetrate into the mystery of the Faith, namely, this, that "the Lord (*YHVH*) He is God (*Elohim*)", which is no small matter, since concerning this it says: "know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart that the Lord he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath, there is none else" (*Ibid.* v. 39). The whole mystery of the Faith depends upon this; from this comes the knowledge of the mystery of mysteries, the secret of secrets. *JHVH ELOHIM* is a full Name, and the whole is one. Herein is a mystery of mysteries to the masters of the esoteric knowledge. And, indeed, blessed are they who endeavour to comprehend the Torah. When the Holy One resolved to create the world, He guided Himself by the Torah as by a plan, as has been pointed out[1] in connection with the words "Then I was by him as *amon*" (Prov. VIII, 30), where the word *amon* (nursling) may also be read *uman* (architect). Was the Torah, then, an architect ? Yes; for if a King resolves to build him a palace, without an architect and a plan how can he proceed ? Nevertheless, when the palace has been built, it is attributed to the King: "here is the palace which

[1] v. Zohar, Gen., 134a.

the King has built", because his was the thought that thus has been realized. Similarly, when the Holy One, blessed be He, resolved to create the world, He looked into His plan, and, although, in a sense, it was the plan which brought the palace into being, it is not called by its name, but by that of the King. The Torah proclaims: "I was by Him an architect, through me He created the world !"—for the Torah preceded the creation of the world by two thousand years; and so, when He resolved to create the world He looked into the Torah, into its every creative word, and fashioned the world correspondingly; for all the words and all the actions of all the worlds are contained in the Torah. Therefore did the Holy One, blessed be He, look into it and create the world. That is why it says not merely "I was an architect", but "I was, alongside of Him, an architect". It may be asked, How can one be an architect with Him ? God looked at His plan in this way. It is written in the Torah: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; He looked at this expression and created heaven and earth. In the Torah it is written: "Let there be light"; He looked at these words and created light; and in this manner was the whole world created. When the world was all thus created, nothing was yet established properly, until He had resolved to create man, in order that he might study the Torah, and, for his sake, the world should be firmly and properly established. Thus [161b] it is that he who concentrates his mind on, and deeply penetrates into, the Torah, sustains the world; for, as the Holy One looked into the Torah and created the world, so man looks into the Torah and keeps the world alive. Hence the Torah is the cause of the world's creation, and also the power that maintains its existence. Therefore blessed is he who is devoted to the Torah, for he is the preserver of the world.

'When the Holy One resolved to create man, there appeared before His Mind potential man, in form and condition as he was to be in this world; and not he alone, but all human beings, before they enter this world, stand before Him in the same way, in that treasure-house of souls where, dressed in a semblance of their earthly forms, they await

their entry into this world. When their time has arrived to descend to this world, the Holy One calls upon a certain emissary appointed over all the souls to go down, and says to him: "Go, bring hither to Me such and such a spirit", and on the instant that soul appears, clad in the form of this world, and is led forward by the angel that the Holy King may look upon it. Then does the Holy One warn that soul, when it shall have reached the earthly regions, to remember the Torah, and devote iself thereto, so that it may know Him and the mystery of Faith; for better were it for a man that he should never be born than not to know Him. Therefore is it presented before the Holy King, that afterwards it may know Him in this world, and be devoted to the Holy One in the mystery of the Faith. Concerning this it is written: "Thou hast been shown to know", that is, shown by the angel to the Holy One, in order to know, to understand, to penetrate in this world to the mystery of the Faith, the mystery of the Torah. And he who, having come into this world, does not study the Torah to know Him—better were it for him that he had never been born; since the only aim and object of the Holy One in sending man into this world is that he may know and understand that *YHVH* is *Elohim*. This is the sum of the whole mystery of the Faith, of the whole Torah, of all that is above and below, of the Written and Oral Torah, all together forming one unity. The essence of the mystery of Faith is to know that this is a complete Name. This knowledge that *YHVH* is One with *Elohim* is indeed the synthesis of the whole Torah, both of the Written and of the Oral, for "Torah" stands for both, the former being symbolic of *YHVH* and the latter of *Elohim*. The Torah being the mystery of the Holy Name, it is therefore called by two names, one of which is general, and the other particular. The general is complemented by the particular, also the particular by the general, both combining to form one synthesis. In the Torah we find, therefore, the synthesis of the Above and the Below, for the one Name, *YHVH*, is above, while the other, *Elohim*, is below, one indicating the higher world and the other the lower. And therefore is it written: "Thou hast been shown to know that YHVH is

Elohim." [162a] This is the essence of all things, and it is necessary that man should perceive it in this world.'

R. Jose then discoursed as follows. 'According to one authority, the evening prayer is obligatory,[1] and it certainly is so, for the recital of the Shema is obligatory in the evening, and the unity of the Holy One is proclaimed at night as it is in the day, and the attribute of night is included in that of the day, and that of the day in the night, and one union is thus attained.

'It is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul", etc. (Deut. VI, 5). This has been interpreted by the Companions, but there is still a question to ask. If, in the recital of "Hear, O Israel," all is included, the Right and the Left, why is it necessary to recite afterwards the passages, "And thou shalt love" and "And it will come to pass if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments . . ." ? Are they not already included in the proclamation of the Unity ? The fact, however, is that in the Shema they are referred to generally, and then they are particularized, which also is necessary.[2] When this unity has been proclaimed in general terms, as from the head of the supernal Point, it was needful further to proclaim it from the mystery of the primeval light which is the beginning of all. Hence, "Thou shalt love" is the first outstretching of the right hand to love the Holy One, blessed be He, with that close attachment which the right hand symbolizes. If a man loves God, then God stretches out His right hand to him to receive [162b] and welcome him with love. Everything in the world depends on the will; spirit rouses spirit, and the spirit in man turned yearningly in love to Him brings down the Divine Spirit. When a man's love to the Holy One is roused, the "right hand" is moved only by a threefold impulse, by "heart", "soul", and "might", for it does not say, "with all thy heart *or* with all thy soul", etc., but "*and* with all thy soul", etc.: all three are essential and necessary. Then does

[1] v. T. B. Berachoth, 27b. [2] Here follows in the original a passage on the symbolism of the phylacteries with reference to the Unity, which is practically a repetition in substance of Zohar, Exodus, 43a, b, and Genesis, 13b.

the Holy One respond and stir up His Right Hand towards that man, and He stretches it out to receive him, and He does indeed receive him; concerning which it is written: "The utterance of the Lord to my lord: Sit thou at my right hand" (Ps. CX, 1); which verse has already been expounded as indicating the grade of nearness to the Holy One in which King David stood when he was united with Him by the Right Hand. There are in the section, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God", etc. (Deut. VI, 4–9), thirteen commandments in regard to the Right Hand: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" is one; "with all thy heart" is two; "and with all thy soul" is three; "and with all thy possessions" is four; "And thou shalt inculcate them in thy children" is five; "and shalt talk of them" is six; "when thou sittest in thine house" is seven; "and when thou walkest by the way" is eight; "and when thou liest down" is nine; "and when thou risest up" is ten; "and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand" is eleven; "and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" is twelve; "and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and on thy gates" is thirteen. All thirteen are included in the right hand, and the left is included in the right. All this is as it should be. And whenever the Left Hand is stirred up, the Right Hand first predominates in it. Therefore, if Israel is worthy, the Left Hand is embraced in the Right, for even when sometimes Judgement (*Geburah*) is roused, it is tempered by Grace; but if it should not be so, then the Right Hand is embraced in the Left, which means that the Left predominates, the Left always first awaking in love in the mystery of the Right, and only afterwards is its power to hurt strengthened as much as necessary. So it is everywhere, as has been noted by the Companions.'

Then came R. Ḥiya to him and kissed him, after which he began to speak on the following: MOREOVER THOU SHALT MAKE THE TABERNACLE WITH TEN PIECES OF TAPESTRY (EX. XXVI, 1). 'Here', said he, 'again we have a symbolism of the Unity, for the Tabernacle was made up of many parts, and yet it says (v. 6), "and the tabernacle shall be *one*". Now, as the human body possesses many organs, higher and lower, some internal and not visible, others

external and visible, and yet they all form one body, so also was it with the Tabernacle: all its individual parts were formed in the pattern of that above, and when they were all properly fitted together "the Tabernacle was one". Of the commandments of the Torah the same is true: they are each and all members and limbs in the mystery above, and when they all unite as one whole, they all ascend into the one mystery. The mystery of the Tabernacle, which thus consists of members and limbs all ascending into the mystery of the heavenly Man, is after the pattern of the commandments of the Torah, which are all also in the mystery of Man, both Male and Female, which, when united, form one mystery of Man. And he who, by breaking even *one* commandment, sullies its perfection, has marred, as it were, the prototype of the Faith, for the commandments are members and limbs after the likeness of man. Therefore all ascends in the mystery of Unity. For the same reason is Israel called "a unique nation"; "who is like thy people Israel, one nation on earth?" (2 Sam. VII, 23); "Ye are my flock, the flock of my pasture, ye are man" (Ezek. XXXIV, 21).'

R. Isaac happened to be in the company of R. Eleazar, and said to him: 'Verily, the love of man to the Holy One arises primarily out of the emotions of the heart, for the heart is the source of the awakening of love. This being so, why does it say also "with all thy soul", as though there were two sources from whence love could emanate, the heart and the soul? If the heart is the source, why mention the soul?' R. Eleazar replied: "There are indeed two sources, yet they are united as one, for heart, soul, and possessions are united as one, though the heart remains intrinsically the centre and basis of all. "With all thy heart" means with the good and the evil inclinations, each of which is called "heart". [163a] "With all thy soul"—the "all" includes all aspects of the soul, viz. *nephesh*, *ruaḥ*, and *neshamah*. As to "with all thy possessions", these also have various aspects, each one different from the other. True love to the Holy One, blessed be He, consists in just this, that we give over to Him all our emotional, intellectual, and material faculties and possessions, and love Him. Should it be asked, How can a man love Him

with the evil inclination? Is not the evil inclination the seducer, preventing man from approaching the Holy One to serve him? How, then, can man use the evil inclination as an instrument of love to God? The answer lies in this, that there can be no greater service done to the Holy One than to bring into subjection the "evil inclination" by the power of love to the Holy One, blessed be He. For, when it is subdued and its power broken by man in this way, then he becomes a true lover of the Holy One, since he has learnt how to make the "evil inclination" itself serve the Holy One. Here is a mystery entrusted to the masters of esoteric lore. All that the Holy One has made, both above and below, is for the purpose of manifesting His Glory and to make all things serve Him. Now, would a master permit his servant to work against him, and to continually lay plans to counteract his will? It is the will of the Holy One that men should worship Him and walk in the way of truth that they may be rewarded with many benefits. How, then, can an evil servant come and counteract the will of his Master by tempting man to walk in an evil way, seducing him from the good way and causing him to disobey the will of his Lord? But, indeed, the "evil inclination" also does through this the will of its Lord. It is as if a king had an only son whom he dearly loved, and just for that cause he warned him not to be enticed by bad women, saying that anyone defiled might not enter his palace. The son promised his father to do his will in love. Outside the palace, however, there lived a beautiful harlot. After a while the King thought: "I will see how far my son is devoted to me." So he sent to the woman and commanded her, saying: "Entice my son, for I wish to test his obedience to my will." So she used every blandishment to lure him into her embraces. But the son, being good, obeyed the commandment of his father. He refused her allurements and thrust her from him. Then did the father rejoice exceedingly, and, bringing him in to the innermost chamber of the palace, bestowed upon him gifts from his best treasures, and showed him every honour. And who was the cause of all this joy? The harlot! Is she to be praised or blamed for it? To be praised, surely, on all accounts, for on the one hand she

fulfilled the king's command and carried out his plans for him, and on the other hand she caused the son to receive all the good gifts and deepened the king's love to his son. Therefore it is written, "And the Lord saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good", where the word "very" refers to the angel of death (i.e. the evil inclination).[1] Similarly, if it were not for this Accuser, the righteous would not possess the supernal treasures in the world to come. Happy, therefore, are they who, coming into conflict with the Tempter, prevail against him, for through him will they attain bliss, and all the good and desirable possessions of the world to come; concerning which it is written: "What eye hath not seen . . . he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. LXIV, 3). Happy are those, too, who have not come across him, for those sinners who encounter him allow themselves to be enticed by him. What profit is it, then, to the Tempter when the sinner obeys him? [163b] Even if it profit him nothing, yet he is certainly doing the will of his Master, and, moreover, it gains him strength. He is not content until he has killed his victim, for then he gains strength and is satisfied; just as the angel of life gains strength when a man walks in the right way. May the Lord preserve us from becoming victims of the Tempter. Blessed are they who prevail against him, and thus become inheritors of the world to come and continually gain strength from the Holy King. Concerning such it is written: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways (to Zion)" (Ps. LXXXIV, 6). They are blessed in this world, and shall be blessed in the world to come.'

R. Jose, R. Judah, and R. Ḥiya, were riding together, when R. Eleazar suddenly met them. On seeing him they all alighted from their asses. Said R. Eleazar: 'Verily I behold the face of the Shekinah! For, to see the righteous and saintly of one's generation is to see the very face of the Shekinah. And why are these called the face of the Shekinah? Because in them is the Shekinah hidden: She is hidden in them, and they reveal Her. For they who are the friends of the Shekinah and are near to Her, are regarded as Her "face". And who

[1] v. Zohar, Exodus, 68b.

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are they? They are those with and by whom She adorns Herself in order to appear before the Supernal King. Now, as you are three, the Shekinah is surely in your midst!' He then forthwith began to expound these words of Jacob to Esau: "Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee" (Gen. XXXIII, 11). 'When Jacob', said he, 'saw on that night the Accuser, Samael, he saw him in the form of Esau, and it was not until dawn was breaking that he recognized him as Samael. When the dawn broke, he looked at him closely, but even then he appeared at times to be the one and then the other. He then looked more closely still and he knew him for the celestial representative of Esau, and he prevailed against him. He said to Jacob, "Let me go, for the dawn breaketh" (*Ibid.* XXXII, 26), and the companions have already explained that he said this, because the moment had arrived when he, the representative of Esau, had to raise his voice in hymns to the Holy One. On this we may remark that indeed the power of Samael is only in the ascendant in the dark, as indicated in the words, "of fear in the night" (Ps. XCI, 5), namely, the fear of Gehenna; so it is that he rules at night alone. Hence he said, "Let me go, for the dawn breaketh", for when morning comes and his power is on the wane, he must depart, and he and his hosts must enter the recess of the abyss in the North, and they must remain until night breaks in on them, and the dogs are loosened from their chains and allowed to roam about till morning. That is why he pressed Jacob to let him go. In the same way Israel's exile has taken place at night, it is in fact called "night". The evil kingdom (Rome), the pagan power, rules over Israel until the morning shall again appear, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause the light to dawn again and the heathen power shall wane and at last disappear. Therefore it was that Esau's representative said, "Let me go, for the dawn breaketh". But Jacob held him, and his power weakened, because night had passed, so Jacob's strength increased, and he saw, in that angel, the image of Esau, but not quite clearly. Then the angel confirmed the blessings he had received. And what was it that Jacob afterwards said to Esau? "For therefore I have seen thy face, as

though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me" (Gen. XXXIII, 10). For he saw in Esau's face now the very image of Samael as he had appeared to him, for the realm to which a person belongs is revealed in his face. And ye, supernal saints, the Shekinah is in you, and your faces reflect the beauty of Her face. Blessed are ye!' Then said he also: 'If we were going in the same direction, I would be in your midst; but now, as ye must go one way, and I another, I will part from you with words [164a] of the Torah.'

Then he began to expound to them this verse: *A song of degrees for Solomon* (*li-shelomoh*). *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord guard the city, the watchman waketh but in vain* (Ps. CXXVII, 1–2). Said he: 'Was it Solomon who composed this Psalm when he built the Temple? (for *li-shelomoh* could be understood to mean "*of* Solomon"). Not so. It was King David who composed it, *about* his son Solomon, when Nathan came to him (David) and told him that Solomon would build the Temple. Then King David showed unto his son Solomon, as a model, the celestial prototype of the Temple, and David himself, when he saw it and all the activities connected with it, as set forth in the celestial idea of it, sang this psalm concerning his son Solomon. There is also yet another interpretation, namely, that "for Solomon" (*li-shelomoh*) refers to Him "whose is the peace" (*shalom*), and this psalm is a hymn above all hymns, which ascends higher than all. "Except the Lord build the house": King David saw all the seven pillars upon which that house, the Universe, stands—for they stand row upon row—and above them all is the Master of the House, who advances with them, giving them power and strength, to each in turn. It is concerning this that King David said: "Except the King, whose is the peace, and who is the Master of the House, build the house, they labour in vain that build it"—that is to say, the pillars. Except the Lord—the King, whose is the peace—guard the city, "the watchman waketh but in vain". This is the pillar upon which the Universe stands, namely the "Righteous" who keeps waking guard over the City. The Tabernacle which Moses constructed had Joshua for its wakeful and constant guard;

for he alone guarded it who is called the "young man", namely Joshua, of whom it says: "Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent" (Ex. XXXIII, 11). Later in its history it was another "young man" who guarded it, namely Samuel (1 Sam. II, 18), for the Tabernacle could be guarded only by a youth. The Temple, however, was guarded by the Holy One Himself, as it is written, "Except the Lord guard the City, the watchman waketh but in vain". And who is the watchman? The "young man", Metatron. And you, holy saints, ye are not guarded as the Tabernacle was guarded, but as the Temple was guarded, namely, by the Holy One Himself; for, whenever the righteous are on a journey the Holy One guards them continually, as it is written: "The Lord shall keep thy going out and thy coming in from now and forever" (Ps. CXXI, 9).' Then they accompanied him on his journey for a distance of three miles, and, parting from him, returned to their own way, and they were moved to quote these words concerning him. "For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands" (Ps. XCI, 11, 12); and "Thy father shall be glad and thy mother rejoice" (Prov. XXIII, 25).'

AND THOU SHALT MAKE THE TABERNACLE WITH TEN PIECES OF TAPESTRY. R. Judah expounded in this connection the following verse: *In the multitude of people is the king's honour, but in the want of people is the confusion of the prince* (Prov. XIV, 28). Said he: 'It is the people of Israel that is referred to in the first clause, Israel who is called "a holy people to the Lord" (Deut. VII, 6). Their number swells to thousands and myriads, and when they attain such large numbers it is "to the King's honour", for those above and those below praise the name of the Supernal King, singing hymns to Him, for the sake of the Holy People, "the wise and understanding people, the great people" (cf. Deut. IV, 6). But is it not written, "for ye are the fewest of all peoples" (*Ibid.* VII, 7)? Truly, "of all peoples" taken together, but not fewer than any individual people, for there is no nation in the world as numerous and mighty as Israel. But see how

numerous are the Ishmaelites and the Edomites! That is so; but it must not be forgotten that all other peoples are intermixed with one another, unlike Israel, which is a pure and unadulterated race, "a holy people unto the Lord", chosen by Him. And therefore "in the multitude of the people is the King's honour", that is to say, the honour of the Supernal King, the Holy One, blessed be He. When [164b] the Holy One enters the synagogue, and the people are united in prayer and sing together praises to the King, He is honoured and glorified, that is to say, the Holy King is strengthened to ascend in glory and beauty. On the other hand, "in the want of people is the confusion of the prince"; that is to say, when He enters a synagogue and finds no congregation come to pray and praise, all the celestial hosts and all the chieftains above are degraded from the high estate to which they were raised by the glorification of that King. For when the Israelites worship the Supernal King with prayer and praise, all the celestial hosts join them and sing in unison with them, and are strengthened by that holy exercise, that the Holy One may be exalted from above and from below in harmony; but when Israel does not assemble to worship the Lord, they lose this dignity, since they do not ascend and cannot praise their Master in fitting manner. Even if ten alone are present, the supernal hosts join them in their worship. The reason is that all the supports of that King are in the number ten, and therefore ten worshippers are sufficient if there are no more. Therefore, concerning the Tabernacle it says: "And thou shalt make the Tabernacle with ten (*'eser*) pieces of tapestry", ten being the number required for the full perfection of the Tabernacle. The shortened form of "ten" (*'eser*) is used here in order to show that the Shekinah herself is not included in the ten, since she broods above the congregation. So it is in all places where a shortened form is used for "ten", as, for instance, "It stood upon twelve (*shne 'asar*) oxen" (1 Kings XII, 25), where the Shekinah was not included in the number, for it says: "and the sea (i.e. the Shekinah) was set above them" (*Ibid.*).'

R. Hiya discoursed on the words: *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who stretchest out the heavens like a*

curtain (*yeri'ah*) (Ps. CIV, 2). Said he: 'These words have been interpreted as follows: When the Holy One was about to create the world He robed Himself in the primordial light and created the heavens. At first the light was at the right and the darkness at the left. What, then, did the Holy One do? He merged the one into the other and from them formed the heavens: *shamaim* (heavens) is composed of *esh* and *mayim* (fire and water, i.e. right and left). He brought them together and harmonized them, and when they were united as one, He stretched them out like a curtain, and formed them into the letter *vau*. From this letter the light spread, so that "curtain" became "curtains", as it is written: "And thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains." Seven firmaments are stretched out and stored in the supernal treasure-house, as has been explained, and over them is one firmament which has no colour and no place in the world of cognition, and is outside the range of contemplation; but, though hidden, it diffuses light to all and speeds them each on its fitting orbit. Beyond that firmament knowledge cannot penetrate, and man must close his mouth and not seek to reflect upon it. He who does so reflect is turned backwards, for it passes our knowledge. The ten curtains of the Tabernacle symbolized the ten firmaments, and their mystery can be comprehended only by the wise of heart. He who grasps this attains great wisdom and penetrates into the mysteries of the universe, for he contemplates [165a] in this that which is above in the region to which every one of them is attached, except those two that are at the right and at the left, and which are hidden with the Shekinah.'

Said R. Jose: 'There are nine firmaments, and the Shekinah completes the number, bringing them up to ten. For if there are ten apart from the Shekinah, then She would be the eleventh, in addition to the ten. Thus really there are nine, and the nine days which come between New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement are a symbol of them: nine days, which are completed by the tenth. The same is true of the ten curtains in the Tabernacle, corresponding to the ten firmaments. Here is a mystery of mysteries, which none but the adepts in esoteric wisdom can fathom—one of those

mysteries of the Holy Lamp (R. Simeon) who could expound the mystery of every firmament and of every being who officiates in each of them. There are seven firmaments above, and corresponding to them another seven below. There are seven firmaments in which the stars and planets have been placed to direct the world in its path. And in both, those above and those below, the seventh[1] is the most exalted, with the exception of the eighth,[2] which stands above and directs them all.

'It is written: "Extol him that rideth upon *araboth*" (Ps. LXVIII, 4). Who is it that rides upon *'araboth*, and what is meant by *'araboth?* It is the seventh firmament, and it is called *'araboth* (lit. mixtures) because it is composed of fire and water, from the region of the South and from the region of the North, being "mixed" from both these regions. And as *'Araboth* is intrinsically the synthesis of all the other six firmaments, it forms intrinsically the Supernal Chariot. The Holy One, blessed be He, loves this firmament more than any of the other firmaments and delights in perfecting it with supernal beauty. Therefore does it say: "Extol Him that rideth upon *'Araboth* . . . and rejoice before Him", Him that rideth upon that hidden, secret firmament, which is set upon the "Living beings" (*Hayyoth*). "And rejoice before Him." The expression "before" suggests, on the one hand, that no one can really have any conception of Him; and, on the other hand, that he who comes before that firmament must do so in joy, and not in sadness, for there all is pure joy with no trace of sadness or gloom. Therefore, when the High Priest was to stand before Him, in the Sanctuary, he had to enter that holy place with joy, and all things about him were to express joy. Therefore is it written: "Serve the Lord with joy, come before him with singing" (Ps. C, 2); for in His service there is no room for sadness. It may be asked, What if a man is deep in sorrow and tribulation, and has no heart to rejoice, and yet his trouble forces him to seek for compassion from the Heavenly King; is he to refrain from prayer because of his sorrow? What can he do? He cannot help being heavy-hearted? The answer is that "all

[1] *Hesed.* [2] *Binah.*

gates have been closed since the destruction of the Temple, but the gates of tears have not been closed", and tears are the expression of sadness and sorrow. Those celestial beings who are appointed over those gates of tears break down all the iron locks and bars and let the tears pass through; so the prayers of those sorrowful ones penetrate through to the Holy King, and that Place is grieved by the man's sorrow, as it is written: "In all their afflictions he is afflicted"[1] (Isa. LXIII, 9). Thus the prayer of the sorrowing does not return unto him void, but the Holy One takes pity [165b] on him. Blessed is the man who in his prayers sheds tears before the Holy One. This is true even on the Sabbath, which must be a day of joy: when a person fasts on Sabbath he manifests sadness on the day when the supernal firmament reigns, that firmament which manifests itself in joy, yes, which is the very essence of joy, communicating joy to all. Yet if he fasts because of a sorrow, it delivers him from that punishment which had been decreed for him, as explained elsewhere. Hence it is written, "Extol Him that rideth upon (lit. in) Araboth"; that is to say, "Honour and glorify Him who rideth upon the Araboth, for there it is that perfect joy and gladness abide". "His Name is JAH", for that Name is connected with that realm. "And rejoice before Him", since one must not appear before Him in sadness, as we have pointed out.'

Said R. Eleazar: 'It ought to have been "who rideth *upon* (*'al*) araboth", why does it say "*in* (*be*) araboth"? Again: it ought to be, "He is in Jah", why does it say "in Jah is His Name"? It is because this verse refers to the Hidden of hidden ones, the most Ancient of all the ancients, the completely unknown and undisclosed. It may be said that, since He rideth *in* it, then in this sphere at least He does disclose Himself. Not so. What the verse tells us is that the Ancient of ancients "rideth in the araboth" in the sphere of Jah, which is the primordial mystery emanating from Him, namely the Ineffable Name *Jah*, which is not identical with Him, but is a kind of veil emanating from Him. This veil is His Name, it is His Chariot, and even that is not manifested.

[1] Translation according to the *Keri*.

It is His "great Name". There is also another Name less great although containing a larger number of letters. But the first Name is the "great Name". For when all is well with this Name, then harmony is complete, and all worlds rejoice in unison. All is included in this Name: those that are above and those that are below. In it the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the Torah, which are the essence of the supernal and terrestrial mysteries, are included, the essence of the Masculine world above and of the Feminine world below. And all these commandments are limbs and members in which the mystery of the Faith is comprised. He who does not endeavour to enter into the hidden meaning of these commandments knows not and has not considered the manner in which the members of the body are organized in the supernal mystery. Although some limbs and members are more important than others, yet a man in whom even the least of them is broken suffers from a disfigurement. How much greater a disfigurement is it when even one of the commandments is broken! Such an act causes, as it were, a blemish in a supernal region. In this connection it is written: "And the Lord God took Adam and put him into the garden of Eden to till it and to keep it" (Gen. II, 15). "To till it" refers to the two hundred and forty-eight upper organs, the positive commandments, and "to keep it" to the three hundred and sixty-five lower organs, the negative commandments. The former belong to the category of "remember", while the latter belong to that of "keep", and both are one. Blessed is he who is worthy to fulfil them! They enable man to perfect his soul and his spirit in this world and in the world to come. The Torah enables him to possess both worlds. He who endeavours with unceasing diligence to keep the Torah strives after the possession of abundant life: life in this world and in the world to come. He is preserved from all evil hap, no harm can come to him. And if this is true of him who endeavours to keep the commandments, how much more true must it be of him who actually performs them!'

R. Hiya and R. Jose once stayed at an inn together, and at midnight they rose [166a] to study the Torah. The innkeeper's daughter also rose and lit the lamp for them, and

then, instead of leaving the room, stayed behind, but out of their sight, that she might listen to the words of the Torah. R. Jose began by speaking on the words: *For the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah is a light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life* (Prov. VI, 23). 'This means', he said, 'that whoever endeavours to keep the commandments in this world will have a lamp lighted for him in the other world through each commandment which he fulfils, and he who studies the Torah will merit the supernal light from which that lamp is lit. For a lamp unlit has no value, and light without a lamp cannot shine, so the one has need of the other. The religious act is necessary to prepare the lamp, and study of the Torah is necessary to light the lamp. Blessed is he who takes it in hand both with light and lamp! "And reproofs of instruction are the way of life." The way of life by which man enters into the world to come consists in the reproofs and instructions which he receives in order that he may learn to keep away from the evil path and walk in the good way; or, again, we may translate, "reproofs of chastisement", which the Holy One brings upon man to purify him from his sins. Blessed is he who accepts them with gladness! Another interpretation of this verse is as follows: "The lamp of the commandment" is the lamp of David, that is, the Oral Torah. This is like a lamp which has continually to be trimmed and attended to in order to receive light from the Written Torah. For the Oral Torah (tradition) has no light in itself except that which it receives from the Written Torah, which is an actual source of illumination.'

When R. Jose had thus spoken, he turned round and caught sight of the innkeeper's daughter standing there behind them. He continued: ' "For the commandment is a lamp." What sort of a lamp? The lamp which is the women's *mitzvah* (precept), the Sabbath light. For, although women have not the privilege of studying the Torah, men who have this privilege give that light to the lamp which it is the women's duty to light. To women goes the merit of preparing the lamp; to men, by the study of the Torah, the merit of supplying the light for the lamp.' When the woman heard these words she broke into sobs. In the meantime her father had also risen and come to join the company. Seeing his daughter in tears he inquired the reason. She told him what she had heard, and he too began to weep. Then said R. Jose to them: 'Thy son-in-law, the husband of this thy daughter, is, perchance, an ignorant man?' And he replied: 'Indeed, that is so. Therefore it is that my daughter and I must constantly weep. Once I observed him leap down from a high roof only that he might be present to hear the *Kaddish* prayer together with the congregation. Then it was that the thought entered my mind to give him my daughter to wife. This I did immediately after the congregation had left the synagogue that day. For, said I to myself, judging from the eager manner in which he leapt from the roof in order to hear the *Kaddish*, he will surely become one day a great scholar; although at that time he was but a youth and I had not known him before. But, in fact, he does not even know how to say Grace after meals. Even the recitation of the Shema I could not teach him.' R. Jose said to him: 'Make a change and take some other man as a husband for your daughter. Or perhaps he may yet have a son who will be a scholar.'

The young man had also by this time got up, and now leapt into the room and seated himself at the feet of the Rabbis. R. Jose looked on him long and earnestly, then said: 'I most certainly see that the light of the Torah will emanate into the world, either from this young man or from his descendants.' The young man smiled and said: 'My masters, may I be allowed to say a few words in your presence?'

Then he began: '*I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion* (Job XXXII, 6). The pillars of the world have commented on these words. Elihu, who uttered them, was of the family of Ram (*Ibid.* 2), and it is said that he was a descendant of Abraham; and this is correct. He was also a priest and a descendant of the prophet Ezekiel, for of Elihu it says that he was the son of Barachel the Buzite (*Ibid.*), and of Ezekiel also it says he was "the son of Buzi the priest" (Ezek. I, 1). Should one, then, suppose that he came of contemptible stock (*buz* = contempt)? Not so, for he came of the kindred of Ram, the very highest (*ram* = high). Then why was he called the Buzite? Because

he thought himself of low account in the presence of those [166b] greater than himself. For that reason a most honourable name is given to him, expressing perfection, by which no other man has been called, namely "man" (Adam, cf. Ezek. II, 1). For this reason, too, it is emphasized that he was of the family of Ram. Now Elihu said: "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom, but there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job XXXII, 7, 8); in other words, at first he was too timid and shy to speak in the presence of older people. Of me the same is true. I had vowed not to speak on the Torah for two months. On this day that period ends; so now that you are here I will dare to open my mouth with the words of the Torah.'

Then began he to expound the words, "The commandment is a lamp." 'This', he said, 'refers to the Mishnah in the same way as the "Torah and the commandment" (Ex. XXIV, 12) mean the Written and the Oral Law respectively. And why is the Mishnah called a "lamp"? Because when she receives the two hundred and forty-eight organs from the Two Arms, she opens her two arms in order to gather them into her embrace, and so her two arms encompass them and the whole is called "lamp". "The Torah is a light" which kindles that lamp from the side of primordial light, which is of the Right Hand, because the Torah was given from the Right Hand (Deut. XXXIII, 2), although the Left was included in it to attain perfect harmony. This light is included in the two hundred and seven worlds which are concealed in the region of that light, and is spread throughout all of them. These worlds are under the hidden supernal Throne. There are three hundred and ten of them: two hundred and seven belong to the Right Hand and one hundred and three to the Left Hand. These are the worlds which are always prepared by the Holy One for the righteous, and from them spread treasures of precious things, which are stored away for the delight of the righteous in the world to come. Concerning them it is written: "That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures" (Prov. VIII, 21). "Eye hath not seen . . . what he

shall do to those that wait for him" (Isa. LXIV, 3). *Yesh*, substance, indicates the three hundred and ten worlds (numerical value of *Yesh*) which are stored away under the world to come. The two hundred and seven (numerical value of *'or*, light), which are of the Right Hand, are called "the primordial light", as the Left is also called "light", but not "primordial". The primordial light is destined to produce issue for the world to come. And not only in the world to come, but even now every day; for this world would not be able to exist at all if it were not for this light, as it is written, "For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever" (Ps. LXXXIX, 3). It was this light that the Holy One sowed in the Garden of Eden, and through the agency of the Righteous, who is the Gardener of the Garden, He set it in rows; and He took it and sowed it as the seed of truth in rows in the Garden, where it grew, multiplied, and brought forth fruit which has nourished the world, as it is written: "A light sown to the righteous" (Ps. XCVII, 11). Thus all the worlds are nourished to repletion by that Gardener who is called "Righteous". Only when Israel is in exile does this light cease. In that time one might think "the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up" (Job. XIV, 11), so how can the world be sustained at all? Therefore it says that "a light is *sown*", that is to say, continually sown. Now from the time when the stream was cut off from the Garden, the Gardener has ceased to visit [167a] it; but the light sows itself, bringing forth fruit out of itself, like a garden which brings forth without being sown, though it must be admitted that the issues and the fruit have no longer that perfection which they attained when the Gardener was present. So the significance of the words "and the Torah is a light" is this, that the Torah, which emanates from the region of primordial light, is continually being sown in the world and sends forth fruit without ceasing, and the world is nourished by it. "And reproofs of instruction are the way of life." There are two ways: a way of life and a way of death. The way of life can be recognized by "reproofs of instruction"; for the Holy One, desiring to guard the way of life, sets on it one who chastises and gives "reproof of

instruction" to the children of the world. Who is this ? It is that "flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. III, 24). He who has experience of the "reproofs of instruction" will certainly endeavour to walk in that way of life where dwell those "reproofs". At first sight it would seem that the words "the reproofs of instruction are the way of life" contradict the beginning of the verse, but, interpreted as above, they contain the whole mystery of Faith. "The commandment is a lamp" contains the mystery of "keep"; "the Torah is a light" contains the mystery of "remember"; while "the reproofs of instruction are the way of life" refers to the prohibitions and penalties contained in the Torah. And all forms one mystery of Faith, and each of them is necessary to the other to produce a proper synthesis. Concerning the mystery of the light which kindles and produces the light in the lamp, it was said unto Aaron: "When thou lightest the lamps" (Num. VIII, 2); for he emanated from the region of that light. Concerning this, too, it is written: "Let there be light, and there was light" (Gen. I, 3). Why, it may be asked, was it necessary to repeat the word "light" in this verse ? The answer is that the first "light" refers to the primordial light which is of the Right Hand, and is destined for the "end of days"; while the second "light" refers to the Left Hand, which issues from the Right. The next words, "And God saw the light that it was good" (Gen. I, 4), refer to the pillar which, standing midway between them, unites both sides, and therefore when the unity of the three, right, left, and middle, was complete, "it was good", since there could be no completion until the third had appeared to remove the strife between Right and Left, as it is written, "And God separated between the light and between the darkness" (*Ibid.*). Since there were five grades which emanated from that primordial light, the word "light" is mentioned five times at the beginning of the account of Creation; all of these grades emanated from the Right Side and were included in it. When they were to be included in the Left Side they were symbolized by "water"; for which reason "water" also is mentioned five times (Gen. I, 6-8). And when they were completed by the

mystery of the middle, "firmament" is mentioned five times (*Ibid.*). And these three, light, water, firmament, are the three grades which include in themselves all five grades, and therefore are all mentioned five times.

'Here is a mystery of mysteries; namely, that in these three is the mystery of the human personality portrayed. Here there is first light, then water, then is a firmament formed in the midst of the waters. Similar is the formation of man at his birth. First he is the "seed" which is light, because it carries light to all the organs of the body. That "seed" which is light sheds itself abroad and becomes [167b] "water", which in its moisture penetrates to all parts of the body; in which body, when it has taken shape, the diffusion of the water is solidified and is called "firmament". This is indicated by the words: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters." As soon as the body has become clearly defined and purified, the moisture which is left becomes refuse, which leads astray mankind, both male and female. Having indicated the emergence of the Accuser, the text writes the word *meoroth* ("lights", Gen. I, 14) defectively, the consequence being the quinsy from which children suffer at the waning of the moon. After that (v. 15) *meoroth* is written in its full form, both lights being united as one. Where ? In that "firmament of heaven"; for when the moon ascends and joins that firmament, then the lights are complete and perfect, without blemish.'

The young man here paused to smile, and then continued: 'All this that I have said concerning the mystery of man's formation through the light of that seed, which, being turned into water, spreads out and is formed into a firmament, all of this can be properly understood when referred to what goes on in the body of a female, where the seed is thus developed into the form of man. But if those five grades above mentioned are the form of Man,[1] in what place was this form fashioned and spread out ? We cannot say it was within the Female,[2] that is the World-to-come, because no form or likeness was fashioned until the letters had emerged and taken shape; besides which, the World-to-come was the

[1] i.e. the Deity. [2] *Binah*.

artificer. Nor can it have been the lower Female,[1] for this was not yet, and when the form of Man emerged, his Female emerged with him, so his form could not have been shaped in her. Where, then, was that seed portrayed and engraved in order to become the form of Man? Herein is a profound mystery, viz. that the Archetypal Adam took shape and form without the co-operation of the Female, but a second Man was engraved and formed from the seed and energy of the first within a female. Archetypal Adam took shape and bodily image out of the substance of the Future World without the conjunction of male and female. Certain letters materialized within a measured outline, and the mystery of Adam was formed and shaped in them, these letters having proceeded in a direct line in their proper order from the mystery of primeval light. Only when the Female came to him with her adornments, and they turned face to face, was a desire conceived whereby within the Female a likeness of Adam was conceived and shaped. This was within the Female, but not so the first Adam, who was formed within the measured outline, as already said. A corresponding process took place on earth. We read: "And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bare Cain" (Gen. IV, 1). Together with Adam's energy it was that which had been left of the ape element in her that produced Cain. Therefore of Cain's birth it does not say, "And *he* begat" but "*she* bare a son". The reason for its saying of Abel also, "And she again bare his brother Abel", is that, although he was conceived of the Masculine side, yet the Accuser weakened Adam's power and energy. Now with the letter [168*a*] *koph* (of Cain: *koph* also means an ape), the letters began to beget. As soon as the impurity was eliminated, the letter *shin* (of Sheth) began to come into operation, the union of the Masculine with the Feminine. Therefore it says "And *he* begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and *he* called his name Sheth" (Gen. V, 3): he, and not she. Then the letters reversed and combining the *aleph* of Adam with the letter following the last in his name—*nun*—took *vau* also (but not *hé*, because that is already found in Abel), and also the first letter of Sheth, and then the name

[1] *Malkuth.*

Enosh came into being (v. 6). What is the difference between *enosh* (man) and *adam* (which also signifies "man")? Enosh (*anash* = to be sick) indicates that he had not the same strength as Adam; concerning which it is written: "What is man (*enosh*) that thou shouldst magnify him?" (Job VII, 17). A weakening of the body, but a strengthening of the soul was the heritage left by Sheth to his son Enosh, a good heritage for his acceptance. The latter passed on a like heritage to his son. The letters now began again to reverse their order and to make straight again that which had become crooked. The son of Enosh was Kenan (v. 9), which (in Hebrew) has the same letters as Cain, with an additional letter to signify that humanity was healed from the curse of Cain. The son of Kenan was Mahalalel: the *mem* (m) was the last letter of Adam; the *hé* and the *lamed* (l) are from Hebel (Abel), and, as the latter was not wicked like Cain, the letters of his name were not changed, with the exception of one, that is the second (the b), and it was altered to *aleph* in Mahalalel, in order to correct any defect that might have been left in him. And so, thus far was the world healed, and that which had become crooked was made straight from Enosh; only the guilt of Adam was not healed yet; that healing came only when Israel stood at Mount Sinai. But the crookedness of Cain and Abel was made good and healed. Yet the world continued to be full of trouble and sorrow until Noah came, concerning whom his father Lamech said: "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (*Ibid.* V. 29). The sin of Adam was not healed until the time when Israel stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah, when the lamp and light became united together. And now, Masters, I may tell you that I am from Babylon, the son of Rab Saphra. Unhappily, I have not been able to know my father, so I came here to the Holy Land, and fearing lest the inhabitants of this land should be lions of wisdom and knowledge, I resolved in humility not to say one word concerning the Torah in the presence of anyone for two months. On this very day those two months have come to an end, and happy am I that to-day, too, ye have arrived here!"

He ceased, and R. Jose lifted up his voice and wept. They all then rose and kissed the young man on the brow. Said R. Jose: 'Blessed is our lot that we were found worthy to come this way so that we might listen to words concerning the Ancient of Days from thy mouth, words which until to-day it had not been granted to us to hear.' Then they all seated themselves again, and the youth said: 'Masters, as I have seen the sorrow that I have brought to this my father-in-law and to his daughter, who are filled with grief because I seem not to know how to recite the Grace after meals, so I must tell you that until I grasp the full significance of this prayer I determine not to consummate my marriage. For, although I could have been united with her without sin of any kind, yet I did not wish to deceive either her or her father about myself, as it was impossible for me to explain myself until the two months were passed.' R. Jose and R. Ḥiya, as well as the innkeeper and his daughter, now all wept together for joy. And R. Jose said: 'We pray thee, as thou hast begun, shed on us further the light of day. Blessed indeed are we that we came this way!'

Thus urged, the youth began to expound to them the Grace to be recited after meals. Said he: 'One verse says, "And thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God" (Deut. XIV, 26), and another verse says, "Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God" (*Ibid.* XXVI, 11). These verses could be fulfilled at the time when Israel dwelt in the Holy Land and appeared daily before the Holy One in the Temple, but in these days how can they be fulfilled? Who can now eat and rejoice before the Lord? However, it can be done. For when a meal is set before a man he should first recite the benediction, "He who bringeth forth bread . . . " (*ha-moẓi*). Why *ha-moẓi* and not simply *moẓi* without the definite article (*ha*)? It is because from everything appertaining to the mystery of the hidden supernal world the letter *hé* is hidden away to show that it belongs to the unseen secret world, [168b] whereas things more disclosed, and which belong to the world below, have this letter, as, for example, "Who bringeth out (*ha-moẓi*) their hosts by number (i.e. the stars, Isa. XL, 26); "He that called (*ha-koreh*) for the waters of the sea" (Amos

V. 8); these are things of the lower world. Now, as soon as a man recites the benediction over the bread, the Shekinah is there before he has well begun. The words, "Thou shalt eat there before the Lord", include the commandment to hold converse, while eating, on the words of the Torah, since the Holy One Himself is present, as it is written, "This is the table that is before the Lord" (Ezek. XLI, 22). And again it is written, "Thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God". And when man is privileged to eat in the presence of his Lord, he must show his appreciation of this privilege by giving charity to the poor, feeding them, as his Lord in His bounty feeds him. And he who eats in the presence of the Holy King must take heed that no greedy person be present at the board, for greediness is of the "other side", as exemplified by Esau, who said to Jacob, "Let me devour (*hal'iteni*)" (Gen. XXV, 30), that is, greedily. This is characteristic of the "other side", as it is written, "the belly of the wicked shall want" (Prov. XIII 25). "Thou shalt eat *before the Lord thy God*", not before the "other side". Nor is it fitting to hold a vain conversation at the table, except on such matters as appertain to the meal; the converse must be on sacred matters, since thereby, as it were, strength is given to the Lord, "And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God", namely, with the "Cup of Benediction". When a man recites the benediction over this cup he must do so with joy, and with no trace of sadness. When he takes into his hands this cup, the Holy One is there beside him, and he must cover his head for joy, holding the cup, and saying—if there be at least three persons partaking of the meal—"Let us bless Him of whose bounty we have partaken, and in whose goodness we live". This response calls for a specially earnest concentration on the part of all towards the Ancient of Ancients, for which reason His Name is not directly mentioned. "*In* whose goodness", and not merely "*by*" or "*from*" whose goodness, that is to say, the Supernal Right Hand itself, while "*from* whose goodness" would symbolize a lower grade,[1] which emanates from that Right Hand. For by this "goodness" was the universe constructed, and by it is it sustained. Why is it

[1] *Zaddik.*

called both "goodness" and "grace" (*hesed*)? It is "goodness" when it contains all within itself, and has not yet expanded to descend below; it is "grace" when it descends to benefit all creatures without distinction, the good and the wicked. But that there is a subtle differentiation between them is clear from the expression, "truly goodness and grace shall follow me" (Ps. XXIII, 6). And in the grace after meals the phrase, "and in whose goodness we live" of the response is immediately followed by the words, "Who feedeth the whole world with thy goodness . . . with grace"; as it is written also, "Who giveth food to all flesh: for his grace endureth for ever" (Ps. CXXXVI, 25). He truly feeds all, the righteous and the unrighteous. This is called "the blessing of the Right Hand". In the Grace after meals the "Left" is not referred to; and that is why the left hand does not assist the right hand in holding the Cup of Benediction. As soon as the benediction of the Right Hand has been said, the "Land of Life" has to be brought into contact with that Right Hand of God through our thanksgiving, so that the bounty of the Right Hand may fall upon that Land and nourish her in order that from her again all the world may be sustained and fed. Which is the reason why the "blessing for the land" comes next in order in the Grace after meals. It is necessary also to mention in it the Abrahamitic Covenant and the gift of the Torah—"for Thy covenant which Thou hast sealed in our flesh, and for Thy Torah which Thou hast taught us"—in order that it may be clearly shown that both the Covenant and the Torah are nourished by "Goodness", the covenant being the support of that "goodness". Hence for women it is not obligatory to say the Grace after meals.[1] This section is concluded with the words: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for the land and for the food", in order that both the "land" and the "food" may be attached to "grace". The "land" is the land of life; the "food" the manifestation of grace, the extention of which is expressed in "praise" in the words, "We praise Thee, O Lord", that is, for all the signs and wonders that emanate from the side of "goodness" [169a] Why is it that the Left has no part in the Grace?

[1] c. T. B. Berakhoth, 20b, where the ruling seems to be different.

It is because "the other side" cannot participate in Israel's food, and if the Left Hand, that is Severity, were also to be roused by referring to this attribute of the Holy One during the Grace, the "other side" would thereby be roused, and he has sold his birthright to our father Jacob. When we wash our hands after meals we so give him his portion; and if the hands are unsoiled he gets a portion of the food which the hands have touched. So he has no portion with us; therefore we must not arouse the Left Hand at all in the Grace, otherwise the Accuser might become the possessor of a double portion, one below and one above, like a first-born; for Esau has sold his birthright to father Jacob, and his portion is below only, and there is nothing for him above. Israel takes his portion from above, but Esau takes from below only. Now, when the "Land of Life" has been blessed from the Right Side and received its nourishment from thence, we have to pray for mercy for all—"Have mercy, O Lord our God, upon Israel Thy people, upon Jerusalem Thy city, upon Zion the abiding place of Thy Glory", etc.; for from that stream of nourishment of the Land of Life do both we and the Sanctuary benefit, since the Sanctuary below will be rebuilt through that Mercy. And on Sabbath, when Judgement is not active, and in order that Victory and Beauty should both be included and united in Grace, we add to the Grace after meals the prayer that begins with the words: "Be pleased, O Lord our God, to fortify us with Thy commandments", so that both Victory and Beauty may be united in the "sure graces of David" (Isa. LV, 3), and "that there may be no trouble, grief or lamentation on the day of our rest". And corresponding to the petition "grant peace" which we offer in the *Amidah*, we say in Grace, "He who makes peace in his high heavens will bestow peace on us." We also say, "Who is good and doeth good"; for all proceeds from the "Right" side, and nothing from the "Left". He who recites the Grace after meals receives the blessings first of all, and a long life is his reward. It is written concerning him who takes the Cup and recites the Benediction: "I lift up the cup of salvations and call upon the name of the Lord" (Ps. CXVI, 13). What do "salvations" imply?

"Salvations" emanating from the Right Hand which saves from all accusers, as it is written: "His right hand saved him" (Ps. CXVI, 13); "May thy right hand save" (*Ibid.* LX, 7).'

Now day broke, and they all stood up and kissed the youth. Said R. Jose: 'Verily, this day is a day of joy, and we shall not depart hence until it has become a day of rejoicing and festivity for all the village. It will be a festival in which the Holy One, blessed be He, will participate.' Then they took the young woman and blessed her with many blessings; after which they bade her father prepare the house for the festivities. And all the inhabitants of that village came to the house and shared in the rejoicings, and they called her "Bride", and made merry with them the whole day. The young man, too, rejoiced with them in the words of the Torah, and when they were seated at the table he spoke on the following verse: "And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood standing" (Ex. XXVI, 15). 'These boards', he said, 'stood round the canopy serving the Bride (the Shekinah), so that within that canopy the Supernal Spirit could dwell. Therefore must the bride below (human bride) have a canopy, all beautiful with decorations prepared for her in order to honour the Bride above, who comes to be present to participate in the joy of the bride below. For this reason it is necessary that the canopy should be as beautiful as possible, and that the Supernal Bride should be invited to come and share in the joy. Just as at every celebration of the covenant of circumcision a beautiful chair must be prepared for the "man of zeal" (Elijah the prophet), since he is present there, so also at every wedding the canopy must be beautifully decorated in honour of the celestial Bride; for as below, so above: as the bride here below is blessed with seven benedictions, so is her prototype.[1] A woman who is being married is called "bride" only after the seven benedictions have been pronounced; and only then can there be conjugal union. All this is according to the pattern of what is above. These seven benedictions the Bride receives from the Spirit above, [169b] from that realm whence all blessings come. But are

[1] The Shekinah—*Malkuth*—who receives the fulness of blessing from the preceding *Sefiroth*.

there not, in fact, only six benedictions with which the (supernal) Bride is blessed ? The last (the seventh), however, is the one which confirms all the rest. Most benedictions are pronounced over wine; why is this ? Because wine symbolizes joy: the wine which is ever guarded in the grapes. Therefore the first benediction of the seven—"Blessed art Thou who createst the fruit of the vine"—is connected with the mystery of wine,[1] which produces joy both above and below. The vine[2] takes all and brings forth fruit in the world. The first awakening of joy proceeds from the left side, as it is written: "His left hand under my head", and then "his right hand embraces me". And that Tree of Life[3] produces fruit through this awakening. Therefore this benediction over the fruit of the vine is the first of all. The second is: "Blessed art thou . . . Who hast created all things to Thy glory". This contains the mystery of the holy covenant, the joy of union. It takes all the blessings from the mystery of the Right Hand in order to produce fruit in that vine; for first that influx proceeds from above by way of the organs, and is then drawn to the sign of the holy covenant, to proceed thence to the vine. And this is of the Right Hand, for the fulness is found only in the right side: the Left Hand rouses the Right and the Right then operates. The Left is afterwards embraced in the Right and the Right in the Left in order that all may form the mystery of Man; hence the benediction, "Blessed art Thou . . . Creator of man", follows as the third in order, and therefore Jacob, the "middle pillar", was in the likeness of Man. The fourth benediction, "Blessed art Thou . . . who hast made man in Thine image, after Thy likeness, and hast prepared unto him, out of his very self, a perpetual fabric . . ."refers to the one pillar of the right thigh.[4] The fifth benediction is: "May she (Zion) who was barren (*akarah*) be exceeding glad and exult, when her children are gathered within her in joy", which means to say: May she who is the centre (*akereth*, from *ikkar*, substance) of the house rejoice when her children are gathered from the four corners of the world. This is the mystery of the other pillar which is united with the left thigh[5] in order to draw

[1] *Binah.* [2] *Malkuth.* [3] *Tifereth.* [4] *Nezah.* [5] *Hod.*

the children in love from all directions together, and set them between the knees; and in those two, wherein is the abode of the Prophets (the realm of Prophecy), is the joy of Her who is the basis of the house. Why is this her joy? Because the gathering together of the children, which is the fruit of the two willows,[1] is effected only by the power of the Prophets. The sixth benediction is: "O make these loved companions greatly to rejoice, even as of old Thou didst gladden Thy creature in the Garden of Eden. . . ." This is the region wherein goodwill, joy, and fellowship are found. It is the pillar of the whole universe, namely the "Righteous". The Righteous and Righteousness are the inseparable "beloved companions". Thus far there are six benedictions by which the bride is blessed. Now the seventh benediction is the synthesis of them all, and from it all the universe is blessed, because it comprises what is above and what is below, it is the epitome of the Ten creative Words, and therefore ten aspects of joy are found in this benediction: "Blessed art Thou . . . Who hast created joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride, mirth and exultation, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship" in order that the bride may be the perfection of all. Blessed are the Israelites who are worthy to represent below that which is above. Concerning them it is written: "And who is like unto thy people Israel, an unique nation on the earth?" (2 Sam. VII, 23).'

Then they all rejoiced for that whole day in the words of the Torah, and the inhabitants of the town appointed the young man to be their head. On the next day R. Jose and R. Ḥiya rose and blessed them all, and departed on their way. As they came near to R. Simeon, he lifted up his eyes, and seeing them, said: 'To-day did I behold you with the eyes of the spirit, and I saw that ye dwelt for two days and a night in the Tabernacle of that Youth, Metatron, and the Youth taught you of the supernal mysteries in the joy of the Torah. Blessed are ye, my children!' When they had told him all that had happened to them, he said: 'Happy are ye, and happy is my lot, for well do I recollect the day when his father, Rab Saphra, accompanied me on my way, and when

[1] *Nezah* and *Hod*.

I parted from him I blessed him with this blessing—that he might have a son who should be a scholar, but not that he himself should live to see it. Happy, my children, is your lot! Concerning you it is written: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. LIV, 13). There is, however, another interpretation of this verse. Does God teach all the children of the Israelites the Torah? Yes, indeed, for when these little ones learn, the Shekinah comes and lends to each of them power and energy to study; for without the help of the Holy One the strain on these babes would be too great.'

R. Simeon was one day together with R. Ḥiya at the gate of Lud, when a young boy approached them. Said R. Simeon: 'Verily, the Holy One, blessed be He, will in a few days embroil the kings of the earth with one another, [170a] in order that while they fight, Israel may have a period of repose.' And the young boy remarked: 'This conflict has already begun, and much blood is being shed in the world.' Said R. Ḥiya: 'How does this young boy know this?' R. Simeon replied: 'Prophecy at times is lodged in the mouths of children, so that they prophesy even more than the prophets of old.' And the boy said: 'Why do you marvel that children have the spirit of prophecy, seeing that this is clearly foreshadowed in the Scriptures? It is written: "And all thy children shall be taught by the Lord." And, truly, when they are taught by the Lord they prophesy. Of all peoples it is only Israel of whose children it says that they shall be taught by the Lord, therefore out of them prophecy comes forth.' Hearing this, R. Simeon came up to the boy and kissed him, saying: 'I have never heard this idea till now.'

AND THOU SHALT MAKE THE BOARDS FOR THE TABERNACLE OF SHITTIM WOOD STANDING. Of the Seraphim also it says that they were "standing"; thus the boards of the Tabernacle corresponded to the Seraphim. It may be asked, Do not all the heavenly Hosts stand? Is it not written, "And I shall give thee walks among these (angels) that stand by" (Zech. III, 7)? "And all the hosts of heaven were standing" (1 Kings XXII, 19)—because they have no joints?[1]

[1] Cf. Bereshith Rabbah, 65.

It is indeed so, but the angels are sometimes called "Seraphim", and sometimes by other names, this name being applied to them all.[1] The verse has already been interpreted in its symbolic significance.

It is written: *A psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want* (Ps. XXIII, 1). The difference between "a psalm of David" and "of David a psalm" has already been explained. In this psalm the Shekinah came first and rested upon the Psalmist, for, as has already been remarked, "a psalm of David" indicates that the first impulse proceeded from the Shekinah. But in this psalm David prays for nourishment, so that we should have thought the initiative would have come from him. The fact is that the Shekinah did indeed first urge David to sing this hymn to the King, to pray to Him for nourishment for Her, which She needs in order to supply food to the whole world; and it is her will that all mankind should pray for food, for when the Holy One wishes to send down to the world nourishment, She first receives it, She being the organ by which the whole world is sustained. Therefore, indeed, did She precede David in this psalm, and She rested upon him to inspire him in this prayer for food. "The Lord is my shepherd": as a shepherd leads his flock to those places where there is grass in abundance, in order to provide them with whatever they need, so does the Holy One also unto Me. Here is another interpretation. There is an ancient dictum that "to provide food for humanity costs the Holy One, blessed be He, as great a struggle as it did to divide the Red Sea".[2] Here are two statements, both of deep significance. On the one hand, since everything done by the Holy One is done according to justice and truth, on which qualities the world is based, and as He always apportions a lot to all according to justice, both to the righteous and the wicked, and all that come into the world—as it is written, "for the Lord is righteous and loveth righteousness" (Ps. XI, 7)—He finds it difficult, when He sees so many wicked people and sinners, to supply them continually with nourishment. He deals with them not

[1] i.e. as explained by Mikdash Melech, when they perform the office of Seraphim (lit. burning ones). [2] T. B. Pes., 118*b*.

according to the rigour of the law, and nourishes and sustains them to the full extent of the supernal Grace which issues forth and descends upon all the beings of the world, and therewith He feeds them, one and all, righteous and saints, wicked and sinners, all creatures whatsoever, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, from the "horns of the buffaloes to the eggs of vermin".[1] There is nothing in the world to which His mercy does not extend, even though, on account of the evil works of men, this is all as difficult to Him as was the dividing of the Red Sea. But was that really difficult to Him? Is it not written: "He rebuketh the sea and maketh it dry" (Nahum I, 4)? "He that calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth" (Amos V, 8)? Is it not true of Him that as soon as [170*b*] He is resolved to do a thing all obstacles are as naught before Him? How was it that the dividing of the Red Sea was difficult to Him? This is the explanation. When the Israelites stood on the shore of the Red Sea and the Holy One was about to divide its waters for them, Rahab, the angel-prince of Egypt, appeared, and demanded justice from the Holy One. He stood before Him and said: "Lord of the world, why dost thou desire to punish Egypt and to divide the Red Sea for Israel? Have not all sinned against Thee? Thy ways are according to justice and truth. Those are idolaters and so are these. Those are murderers, so are these." Then was it difficult for Him to waive justice, and had not the Holy One called to mind Abraham's obedience in rising early (Gen. XXII, 3) to sacrifice his only son, they would all have perished in the Red Sea, because all that night God was weighing Israel in the scales of Justice, as we have been taught that the expression, "so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Ex. XIV, 20) indicates that the supernal angels appeared on that night to sing hymns of praise to the Holy One, and the Holy One said unto them: "The works of My hands are about to sink into the depths of the sea, and ye desire to sing unto Me hymns of praise?" But "it came to pass that in the morning watch the Lord looked . . ." (*Ibid.* V. 24); that is to say, He "looked" for Abraham's sake,

[1] v. T. B. Sabb., 107*b*.

He "looked" upon Abraham's merit, who "rose up early in the morning" to accomplish the will of the Holy One. Then it was that the waters "went back", they fled before Israel. Similarly, it has been stated[1] that "marriage unions are as difficult for (lit. before) the Holy One as was the dividing of the Red Sea". As at the dividing of the Red Sea those who stood on the one side of the sea were drowned, and the others were saved, so in marriages also there is weeping for some and singing for others; He allows one man to die and gives his wife to another man, and at times a bad man gets a good wife. These happenings are great mysteries, but it all conforms to justice, and all that the Companions have said on this subject is quite true; as is also that which they have stated concerning the difference between "before" (*liphne*, lit. the face of) and "from before" (*miliphne*). These matrimonial decisions are arranged by him who stands before the Holy One and ministers before Him. Therefore the aforementioned dictum does not run, "hard are unions to the Holy One", but "before (to the face of) the Holy One"; i.e. to him who is appointed over the arrangement of marriages and over the supply of food, since the power is not his, he is merely the administrator and under authority. [171a] Now King David transmitted his prayer concerning nourishment to the realm above, since there the supply never ceases. Therefore he said: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want", which was as much as to say, "my supply of nourishment cannot fail, since it issues from that stream which comes out of Eden and which never ceases to flow". Hence it is written, "a psalm of David", because the Shekinah gave him the impetus to pray and to praise. When that region receives nourishment from above, all those supernal beings who sanctify their Lord are thrilled and raise their wings when the Shekinah appears with that food, in order that they may not look upon Her. There are three battalions of them. The first proclaim "Holy!" and then call to the second while they raise their wings; and the second proclaim "Holy" and call to the third while raising their wings; and at last they all raise their wings and cry together: "Holy is the Lord of

[1] Cf. Lev. R., ch. VIII.

hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. VI, 3). So they are all joined to one another, and dovetail into one another, just as the boards of the Tabernacle were "bound to one another" (Ex. XXVI, 17). The boards stood ever upright and did not bend, just as the angels, the "standing ones", who, having no joints, never bend. As the boards had two holders which united one board with the next, so is one angel joined to the other: each one takes his own and his neighbour's wing, and so enfolded within each other they stand closely united. Of the Torah the same is true: the students both teach and learn from one another in perfect reciprocity. We read next: "He maketh me to lie down in pastures of tender green; he leadeth me beside the waters of rest; he quickeneth my soul". "Pastures of tender green" are those which lie round the supernal springs, from whence all nourishment emanates. These pastures are also called "the pastures of Jacob" (Lam. II, 2), and are called "green pastures" in contrast to those pastures which lie outside—"the pastures of the desert" (Joel II, 22). It might be said: Is it not written, "Let the earth bring forth tender (green) grass" (Gen. I, 11), showing that "green" is applied also to what is below? The fact is that this "green" of earth emanates from those "pastures" above, germinating and flourishing through the life-giving energy supplied them from above. "He leadeth me beside the waters of rest." These "waters of rest" are those which come forth from that region which proceeds from Eden. "He quickeneth my soul", namely David's soul, which he desired to bring into contact with the sphere of his own grade whence it emanated. In these "waters of rest" the righteous will find rest in the world to come, as it is written: "And the Lord shall give thee rest constantly . . . and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. LVIII, 11).

AND THOU SHALT MAKE FIFTY CLASPS OF BRASS. R. Eleazar and R. Abba were sitting together one evening, and when it grew dusk they went into a garden by the Lake of Tiberias. As they were going they saw two stars rush towards one another from different points in the sky, meet,

of the comet actually passes over them, whereby they are enabled to renew their colour [172a] and their energy according to their need. This must be true, since it is similarly indicated in the Book of King Solomon, in regard to the science of precious stones, that when these stones are denied the light and sparkle of certain stars, their development is retarded and they never reach their full perfection. And the Holy One, blessed be He, has ordered all things so that the world may be perfected and beautified, and accordingly it is written that the stars are "to give light upon earth" (Gen. I, 17), in all the things which the world needs for its perfection.'

'It is written: "And thou shalt make fifty clasps of brass"; and again it says, "And thou shalt make fifty clasps of gold" (Ex. XVI, 6), and we have been taught that he who never saw those clasps in the Tabernacle has not seen the light of the stars in heaven, for in appearance and colour they reminded all who looked upon them of the stars. Now there are stars in the heavens which have emerged from that firmament to which all the stars are attached. In that firmament there are one hundred latticed windows, some on the east and some on the south side of the firmament. At each window there is one star. And when the sun passes by these windows and lattices in the firmament he sends out flashing rays, and the stars catch up these rays and are coloured by them. Some take on the red of brass, some the yellow of gold; and for this reason some stars shine with a red, and some with a yellow gleam. The windows are divided into fifties, and, as we have said, in each one is a star. The windows in the east catch the yellow rays, while those in the south catch the red. The stars which shine by night mingle with those that proceed from that firmament and they sparkle and shine, ruling over the elements of this world, some over brass, some over yellow gold, and these elements increase and develop through the power of the stars. These stars rule for the twenty-five and a half points of the night, which are in the division of an hour. Those stars which are appointed over brass are red, and they both shine and sparkle. When they shall have diffused their light three times towards the east, or five, or

seven times, then the kings of the Gentiles will rise against the east, and from that region all gold and riches will disappear. When they sparkle, one, two, four, six, one after another, then fear and trembling will settle upon that region. When the rays will strike and subside, then strike and subside again, wars will arise in the world on that side, for there will be a vibration and stirring before the Holy One in connection with those angel-princes who have charge over the nations of the world. And so it will be on the other side also. Therefore I say, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. And He changeth the times and the seasons" (Dan. II, 20, 21). All things are in His hands, and He has liberated His holy people from the power and dominion of the stars and planets; for they have become objects of worship for the nations, but Jacob has no portion in them, because he belongs to Him who is the Creator of all things.

'There is a firmament high above all these firmaments, hidden, concealed, and the seal of the Tabernacle reigns over that firmament, which is called "Hall of the Tabernacle". There all those windows are to be found, on this side and on that, and it holds all the arrangements of the Tabernacle. Six of the windows are greater than all the others, and one, which is concealed, rules over them all. One of these seven is called "the window of light", and into it the star which the wise call *Yad* (hand) enters, which "hand" stretches out to the domain of the tribe of Judah. This does not mean that that tribe has any part in it, since the tribes of Israel are not under the dominion of the stars, and the tribe of Judah rules over that star, and not the star over it. But when members of this tribe became corrupted in their ways and turned away from the Holy One, then they began to divine their fate by contact with that window and the star that dwelt in it, saying: "It is the *hand* that conquers all the nations"; for concerning Judah it is written, "Thine *hand* shall be in the neck of thine enemies" (Gen. XLIX, 8), and they followed the star and worshipped it. Concerning which it is written: "And Judah did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings XIV, 22). When that star

comes out it stretches out a hand with five rays, which are five fingers, which shine and sparkle in that window. [172b] Sorcerers and astrologers are in fear and awe of this region, for when this star reigns they become confused and their predictions come to naught. It may be asked, If that firmament is hidden, how is it that they have knowledge concerning this star? The answer is that they have an outward sign from which they know when it is in the ascendant, and they fear it, and at such periods their incantations do not succeed. Thus it is that there have been times when people were lucky in connection with this star, and times again when they came to grief over it. For this reason the number of astrologers and sorcerers decreases in the world, because they become bewildered when their incantations and predictions fail. But the ancient astrologers knew of that star, and studied the outward sign which was disclosed to them.

'The second window is called "the window of the claw", because it has the form of a claw, and the star which enters into it is known to the wise as "Viper", since when this star reigns severe judgement prevails. It has a head like a viper lying in wait. From that window six hundred thousand myriads of spirits proceed, which spirits rule over the toe and finger nails of men when the nail-parings are thrown away instead of being burnt, for these nail-parings are used by the sorcerers for their divinations. All those who throw away their nail-parings, or use them for witchcraft while this star is in the ascendant, cause death, and increase the power of sorcery.

'The third window is called "Breastplate". A star enters into it, called "Bright Light". This is the one whose rays watch over every spirit, and rest, redemption, and goodness are in it, with no trace of the accusing element or severity. When it is in the ascendant all is repose and light, for peace, satisfaction and harmony prevail throughout the world.

'The fourth window is called "Chalice", and the star which enters into it is called by the wise "Cluster of cypress flowers", because it comes out like a cluster (*eshkol*) and spreads its rays in the form of the grapes. It awakens mercy in the world; it removes evil far off and brings the good

near. Much procreation takes place in the world at this time. Men do not object to helping one another when required.

'The fifth window is that which is called "Cistern", because the star which enters it always "draws" like a bucket and is never at rest: the wise of heart can never discover its real nature, since it never remains still. They, therefore, only with great difficulty examine it and come to some conclusion about it.

'The sixth window is called *Nagha* (lit. brightness), and a star enters into it called *Gazron*, because when it reigns over the world it is a sign of judgement, which reveals itself in many severe decrees (*gezeroth*) and many punishments. Every day new decrees of evil are enacted against the world, and even before these have been completely carried out other fresh ones are enacted. In the present dispensation this star is not often in the ascendant, but when the days of the Messiah will draw nigh it will dominate the world, and as a consequence noxious beasts and diseases will rage in the world, evil haps will constantly be renewed, and Israel will be in great tribulation. But when they are thus oppressed in the darkness of exile the Holy One will cause the day to break for them "and the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom . . . shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High" (Dan. XII, 27), and the reign of the heathen nations will be terminated and Israel shall rule over them, and there will be fulfilment of the words, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun" (Isa. XXX, 26), and then will this cause the seventh window to open to the whole world, whose star is the "Star of Jacob", concerning which Balaam said: "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Num. XXIV, 17). This star will shine for forty days and forty nights, and when the Messiah shall be revealed and all the nations of the world shall gather around him, then will the verse of Scripture be fulfilled which says: "And in that day the root of Jesse which stands for an ensign of the peoples, to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isa. XI, 10).'

R. Simeon quoted here the verse: "But none saith, Where is God (*Eloha*) my maker who giveth songs in the night?"

(Job xxxv, 10). Said he: 'The name "Eloha" here refers to Her who sings perpetual hymns of praise to the "King whose is the peace", who is like a lamp that never ceases to receive the light of supreme joy from the fulness [173a] of His joy. Hence, "Who giveth songs in the night." All those stars which shine in heaven do sing and praise the Holy One, blessed be He, all the time that they are visible in the sky. And the angels above sing the praises of their Lord in successive watches of the night. By night various sides are active in different ways. At the beginning of the night, when darkness falls, all the evil spirits and powers scatter abroad and roam about the world, and the "other side" sets forth and inquires the way to the King from all the holy sides. As soon as the "other side" is roused to this activity here below, all human beings experience a foretaste of death in the midst of their sleep. As soon as the impure power separates itself from the realm above and descends to begin its rule here below, three groups of angels are formed who praise the Holy One in three night watches, one following another, as the Companions have pointed out. But whilst these sing hymns of praise to the Holy One, the "other side", as we have said, roams about here below, even into the uttermost parts of the earth. Until the "other side" has thus departed from the upper sphere, the angels of light cannot unite themselves with their Lord. This is a mystery comprehensible only to the wise. The angels above and the Israelites below both press upon the "other side" in order to oust it. The supernal angels, when they desire to be united with their Lord, cannot acomplish this until the "other side" has been expelled from the higher realms. What, then, do these celestial beings do? Sixty myriads of holy angels descend on to the earth and bring sleep to all the children thereof. Through this sleep they give this world to the "other side"—save only in the Land of Israel, where it has no sway.' As soon, therefore, as it has left the angels they ascend before their Lord, and begin to sing praises. Similarly, Israel here below cannot unite themselves with their Lord until they have pushed the "other side" away from them, by giving it its due to keep it occupied. Then they, too, approach the

Holy One, blessed be He, and thus the Accuser is finally found neither above nor below. It might be asked, That there is an accusation below is easy to understand, but what accusation can there be above? The truth is that the holy spirits cannot approach their Lord until the spirit of impurity has been banished from their midst, for holiness cannot be mixed with impurity, any more than the Israelites can be mingled with the heathen nations. Thus both regions, the celestial and the terrestrial, must expel the powers of unholiness before their inhabitants can approach and praise with joy and delight their Holy King. Therefore, when night falls and the holy supernal angels marshal themselves to approach Him, they first thrust out and banish the evil power. A king once had certain very precious stones which he kept locked away in a separate box in his palace. This king, in his wisdom, in order to keep prying eyes away from the casket, took a dangerous serpent and wound it round the box, thus effectually preventing anyone from stretching out his hand towards it. But the king had a great friend, and to him he said: "Whenever thou desirest to examine my gems, draw nigh without fear, and do such and such a thing to the serpent and he will be rendered harmless; then thou wilt be able to open the box and enjoy the sight of its contents." In like fashion the Holy One set about the inmost chamber of His Presence a serpent, the "other side". Now when the holy seraphic beings draw nigh with intent to enter the sphere of holiness, they come upon that serpent and are afraid lest they be defiled thereby. It may be asked: Since all angels are formed of fire, and fire cannot receive impurity, why are they afraid? The answer is indicated by the verse: "He maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. civ, 4). The first of these categories are those angels that stand outside while the second are those that stand within the innermost circle. Now those who encounter the serpent are "spirits", and that serpent is a spirit also. The spirit of impurity does not mingle [173b] with the spirit of holiness, and therefore those angels that are called "spirits" cannot enter into the Holy Presence because of that spirit of impurity. Those angels, however, which are within are "fire",

and that supernal holy fire ejects the impurity so that it cannot enter into the innermost place. Thus all combine to push out the impure power and prevent it from mingling with them; and, as we have said, the celestials can only begin to praise the Holy One after they have banished the "other side" from the heavenly courts.

Now, as we have said, the three watches of the night correspond to the hosts of angels when they divide themselves into three groups in order to sing praises to the Holy One. Therefore the conductor of them all is the "harp of David", for this never ceases to play, but constantly emits hymns of thanksgiving and praise before the Supernal King, and concerning this it is written: "Who giveth songs in the night". But how, it may be asked, can this be ? You said that at the beginning of the night all the evil powers and spirits arise and wander over the face of the earth, and we have been taught that these all emerge from the side of the North; and you have said further that when the north wind awakens at midnight, those evil spirits and powers gather together from all the diverse parts of the earth in which they have been roaming and enter into a cavern in the Ocean. But, if that is the case, how can these evil spirits roam about in the side of the South at the beginning of the night, for then the South wind reigns ? The answer, however, is that if it were not for the South, which keeps the evil power at bay and finally thrusts it away, that spirit of impurity would wipe out the whole world and none could withstand it. But when that "other side" is roused it is only in the West, which side rules at the beginning of the night, at which time the whole world is sunk in sleep. Therefore the Holy One prepared a healing medicine for the world in the way we have said. Blessed are the Israelites in this world and in the world to come, because the Holy One, blessed be He, has chosen them above all the other nations of the world.'

R. Eleazar and R. Abba entered the house and rested awhile. At midnight they got up to study the Torah. Said R. Abba: 'Verily, now is the time of the Holy One's favour, since we have often remarked that at the moment of midnight the Holy One, blessed be He, goes in unto the righteous in

the Garden of Eden to have joyous fellowship with them. Blessed is he who is occupied with the study of the Torah at this time.' R. Eleazar asked: 'What is the manner of this joyous fellowship ?' and continued, answering himself: 'At midnight the Holy One is roused in the love of the Left Hand towards the Community of Israel; for the arousing of love proceeds only from the Left Hand. The Community of Israel, however, has no gift through which to approach the King, nor any excellent worth in herself; only when He beholds the spirits of the righteous, crowned with many good works and with many acts of righteousness accomplished during the preceding day, He is more pleased with them than with all the savour of the sacrifices which the Israelites offer. Then a light breaks forth, and all the trees of the Garden of Eden begin to sing, and the righteous are crowned there with all the joys of the world to come. And when a man wakes at that time to study the Torah, he participates in the joy of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. A Divine Name engraved in thirty-two letters is then wrought into a garland for them, this being one of the mysteries of the righteous.'

R. Eleazar then began to discourse on the verse: *Hallelujah. I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the council of the upright, and in the congregation* (Ps. CXI, 1). Said he: ' "Hallelujah" is, as has already been truly pointed out by the Companions, the most excellent of all the ten expressions of praise[1] used by David, since it embraces in one single word the Divine Name and the call to praise, and in addition that Name which it contains (*Jah*) is the epitome of the highest Holy Name. "I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart (*lebab*)." Wherever King David composed an alphabetical [174a] Psalm, as in this case, he intended to indicate the mystery of the twenty-two engraved letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which issue forth in the tracing of thirty-two paths.[2] There are letters which emanate from the mystery of the supernal world, and there are others which

[1] Benediction, Hallel, prayer, song, psalm, melody, *nezah*, blessed, thanks, Hallelujah. Cf. Midrash Teh., 1. [2] The thirty-two paths of the primordial Wisdom.

are formed on a smaller pattern. In this psalm we have the mystery of the alphabet which the upper world gives to the lower. Thus, in "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart", the word *lebab* (heart) alludes to two hearts, the good and the evil inclination, both of which dwell in man; for one must thank the Holy One for all things, not only with one's good, but also with one's evil inclination. For from the side of the good inclination good comes to man, so he has to give thanks to Him who is good and who does good. From the evil inclination, again, comes seduction, and one must needs thank and praise the Holy One for all that comes to him, whether it be from one side or from the other. "In the council (mystery) of the upright and in the congregation." "In the mystery (*sod*) of the upright" is an allusion to the supernal holy angels who know and comprehend the mystery of the Holy One and are a part thereof; "the congregation" refers to the children of Israel when they congregate in tens to give thanks to the Holy One, blessed be He. Thus one has always to praise the Lord, for evil as for good, and to proclaim His wondrous deeds unto all men, for when these wonders are thus proclaimed, and His goodness, wisdom and majesty are lauded among all His creatures, then He is truly glorified in the world. Concerning this it is written: "and I shall be magnified and sanctified" (Ezek. XXXVIII, 23).'

R. Judah, commenting on the words, "Let the whole soul (*neshamah*) praise the Lord" (Ps. CL, 6), said: 'We have been taught that all souls emanate from one holy Body, and animate human beings. From what place (in the Body) do they come? From the place which is called "Jah"[1] 'And what is the nature of that region?' Said R. Judah: 'It is written, "How manifold are thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast thou made them all" (*Ibid.* CIV, 24); for, as we have learnt, in that wisdom, the spring of which divides into thirty-two rivers, all things that are, both above and below, were completed; it is called the "Holy Spirit", containing as it does all other spirits that are.' Said R. Isaac: 'When R. Simeon reflected on this subject, his eyes filled with tears, and he said: All the treasures of the Supernal King are disclosed by means of one key,

[1] Al. *Yod* = "Hand".

which reveals in secret chambers supernal tracings. Who can comprehend what is hidden in the spring of wisdom? Moses revealed it not on the day whereon he made known other deep mysteries, although all things were revealed through him, save only in the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to receive him into the holy Council above, and to remove him and hide him away from men, as it is written: "I am a hundred and twenty years old to-day" (Deut. XXXI, 2). On that very day the span of his days was completed and the time of his entrance into that region was arrived, as it is written: "Behold, thy days have come near that thou must die" (*Ibid.* 14): "near" being meant literally. For Moses did not die. But is it not written, "And Moses died there"? The truth is, however, that although the departure of the righteous is always designated "death", this is only in reference to us. For over him who has attained completeness, and is a model of holy faith, death has no power, and so he does not, in fact, die. This was, for instance, the case with Jacob, in whom was the completeness of Faith, as may be confirmed from the words: "thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name" (Gen. XXXV, 10); "Israel" means the completion of all, as it is written, "And thou, O my servant Jacob, fear not, neither be dismayed, O Israel, for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity . . ." (Jer. XXX, 10).' R. Judah derived the fact of Israel's completeness from the words " for I am with thee" (*Ibid.*). 'Happy', he said, 'was his lot in that his Lord spoke to him in this wise! It does not say, "for thou art with Me", but "for I am with thee"—that is to say, his Master came to unite His lot with His servant's, and to dwell with him.' R. Simeon said: 'It was well said by R. Abba that the verse, "and Jacob shall return and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid" (*Ibid.* 11), signifies that Jacob shall return to be called by another name, as it is written: "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel." There is, however, also another interpretation, as follows: "and Jacob shall return" —namely, to the place whence he was taken; "and be in rest"—while in this world; "and be quiet"—in the world to

come; "and none shall make him afraid"—not even the Angel of Death. So we see that all perfection was in him.' Said R. Isaac: 'The Companions have proved the last point in another way, viz., from the words "and thy seed (shall return) from the land of their captivity"; just as his seed is alive, so also is he alive.' [174b]

AND THE MIDDLE BAR IN THE MIDST OF THE BOARDS SHALL PASS THROUGH FROM END TO END. R. Judah here quoted the verse, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due time" (Eccl. x, 17). 'What', he said, 'precedes this? "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning".' Said he: 'Woe unto mankind that they neglect the worship of their Lord, though He perpetually lavishes upon them His providential care, setting before them the precious treasure of the Torah, which they neglect. There are, as we have learnt, three cardinal duties which a man must fulfil towards his son, namely, circumcision, redemption of the first-born, and the finding of a wife; and all three God performs for Israel; circumcision, as it is written, "And the Lord shall circumcise thy heart" (Deut. xxx, 6); redemption, as it is written, "And the Lord thy God hath redeemed thee" (Deut. xv, 15); the finding of a wife, as it is written, "He created them male and female, and God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. i, 27, 28). Moreover, he carried his children on his wings (Ex. xix, 4).' Said R. Jose: 'All these benefits which He gave unto Israel were great, but the Torah is the greatest of all. For there is nothing which so ennobles a man, either in this world or in the world to come, as the Torah, concerning which it is written, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice" (Prov. viii, 15).

'We are told that when Rab Huna went to Palestine he found the students there discoursing on the verse, "And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he had swallowed up, and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him" (Jer. li, 44). They paid no attention to Rab Huna, as he was not known to

them, being still young. When he entered the house of study, he found the students somewhat puzzled by the fact that Bel is given as the name of Nebuchadnezzar's god, whereas elsewhere we read, "But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, as the name of my god" (Dan. iv, 5); and also, as to the exact meaning of the words, "I will bring out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up". Rab Huna thereupon stood up between the pillars and said: "Were I in my own place I would interpret this verse." But they took no notice of him. He stood up a second time and made the same remark. Then R. Judai bar Rab came to him and gave him a seat before him, saying: 'Speak, my son, for of the words of the Torah it says, "She (wisdom) crieth in the chief place of concourse" (Prov. i, 21).' Then Rab Huna began thus: 'We have been taught that in early times, before Jacob appeared, illness was unknown, and mankind were perfectly healthy until their time came, when they passed away without any previous sickness. When Jacob came he prayed to God, saying: "Lord of the world! May it please thee to grant that a man should first fall ill for two or three days, and then be gathered unto his people, in order that he may have time to put his house in order and repent of his sins." The Holy One replied: "It shall be so, and thou shalt be the pledge and the sign thereof." Therefore it is written concerning him, "And it came to pass after these things, that Joseph was told, Behold, thy father is sick" (Gen. xlviii, 1)—this being something new in the world. From the death of Jacob until the time of King Hezekiah, no man ever recovered from an illness, but of Hezekiah it is written, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death" (Isa. xxxviii, 1), and later, "Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed unto the Lord" (v. 2). He said unto Him: "May it be Thy pleasure that men should be enabled to recover from their maladies, so that they may praise Thy Name and acknowledge Thee and turn unto Thee with perfect repentance, and thus be found worthy before Thee." And the Holy One replied: "So be it! And thou shalt be the first sign thereof." So Hezekiah experienced something which no human being had previously experienced,

concerning which it is written: "The writing of Hezekiah King of Judah, and he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness" (*Ibid.* v. 9). We are also told that on that day the sun went backward ten degrees. Merodach Baladan used to dine at the fourth hour (of the afternoon), having got up at the ninth hour. When he awoke on that day, he saw the sun still standing at the fourth hour! In great wrath he cried out to his attendants, saying: "What is this conspiracy that ye have devised to kill me by starvation?" "How, [175a] master?" they inquired. "Have ye not let me sleep for the space of a day and the third part of a day?" said he. "Not so!" they replied. "What has happened is that the God of Hezekiah has performed two miracles this day: He has healed Hezekiah and brought back the sun unto this hour." Then said the King: "Is there in the whole world a greater god than mine?" They replied: "Yea, the God of Hezekiah." The King rose from his throne, and wrote: "Peace be to Hezekiah the King of Judah, peace be to his God, and peace be to Jerusalem, the holy city." Presently he again rose up from his throne, and retiring three steps as though in a king's presence, wrote: "Peace be to the great God in Jerusalem, peace be to Hezekiah the King of Judah, and peace be to Jerusalem the holy city." Then the Holy One spake to him and said: "Thou hast stepped back in my honour three paces. By thy life! three august kings who shall rule over the whole world will descend from thee!" And so it was. The first was Nebuchadnezzar. Of him Daniel says: "Thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth" (Dan. II, 38, 39). And it says further: "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was three score cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits" (*Ibid.* III, 1). Said Nebuchadnezzar: "The image which I saw in my dream had a head of gold on a body of silver, but I want to make an image all of gold and a golden crown on its head." And so we are told that on that day Nebuchadnezzar summoned all nations, peoples, and tongues, in order that they might worship that image, and he took one of the vessels of the Sanctuary on which the Holy Name

was engraved and put it into the mouth of that image. Then he spoke boastful words until Daniel appeared, and came close to the image, and said: "I am an ambassador of the highest Lord: He has decreed through me that thou shouldst depart from here!" and uttered the Holy Name. Immediately the vessel departed and the image fell and broke in pieces. This, then, is the meaning of the words: "I will bring out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up, and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him." ' Then R. Judah stood up and kissed young Rab Huna on his head, and said: 'Had I not drawn thee near to me, I should not have discovered thy wisdom.' From that time the students treated him with great respect.

"Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due time." R. Jose applied this verse to Moses when he brought out Israel from Egypt and made them a free people, for then they, the "princes", ate the Passover in due season (Ex. XII, 11). Said R. Simeon ben Yoḥai: "Have I not said that all the words of King Solomon are found within the holy Temple (i.e., have an esoteric significance)? What you have said is quite true, as far as it goes, and the application to Moses is quite feasible, but this particular verse soars into higher reaches, and is in the holy Temple. "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles." "Land" (*ereẓ*), without any specific designation, refers to the earth (*ereẓ*), as it is written: "He cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel" (Lam. II, 1). This "earth" is one of the mysteries which are found within the crowns of the Holy King, for it is written: "On the day when the Lord God made earth and heaven" (Gen. II, 4). And this "earth" derives all its nourishment from the holy perfection called "heaven". And when the Holy One resolved to destroy His house and the Holy Land below, He first removed the "Holy Land" which is above—the celestial prototype—and cast it down from that grade where it had formerly imbibed nourishment from the holy Heaven, and then He caused the land below to be devastated: first He "cast down from heaven the earth", and then "He remembered not His footstool" (*Ibid.*). For there is a

dictum concerning the Holy One's ways: "When He resolves to judge the world, He first executes judgement above, and then there follows the judgement below." First "the Lord shall punish the host of heaven in heaven", and then "the kings of the earth upon the earth" (cf. Isa. XXIV, 21).' Said R. Simeon: 'Blessed art thou, O Land (earth), that thy king is free (*ben ḥorin*), and nourishes thee in plenty without fear of interference from the "other one" (Severity), all being nourished by that Supernal King. "And thy princes eat in due time", this "time" being that of which it is written: "In time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" (Num. XXIII, 23). "Woe to thee, O land (earth), when thy king is a child", as the prophet threatened Israel with the words, "And I will give children to be their princes" (Isa. III, 4); for, indeed, woe unto the earth when it imbibes nourishment from the Left Side, the attribute of Severity, which is the symbolism of the words, "and thy princes eat in the morning", that is, have to imbibe the vapours of that early blackness [175*b*] which reigns before the Light breaks and banishes all other rulers by the resplendence of its own majestic glory.'

R. Simeon, we are told, explained thus the words, "And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass from one end to the other." ' "The middle bar" ', he said, 'signifies Jacob, the perfect saint, as we have pointed out on another occasion in connection with the characterization of Jacob as "a complete man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. XXV, 27). It does not say, "dwelling in a tent", but "dwelling in tents", which denotes that he unified the two "tents" (of Severity and Mercy). The same implication may be found here: "The middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass from one end to the other", uniting them. Jacob was perfect in regard to both sides, the Holy Ancient and the Microprosopus, and also to the supernal Grace and the supernal Power, harmonizing the two.' R. Simeon said further: 'I perceive that Wisdom (*'Ḥokmah*) is the totality of all the holy *Sefiroth*, and that supernal Grace (*Ḥesed*) emanates from Wisdom, and Power (*Geburah*), which is the prompter of severe judgement, from Understanding (*Binah*). Jacob harmonized both sides:

the Fathers (Abraham and Isaac) signified the totality of all, and Jacob signified the union of the Fathers. We have learnt that Wisdom beat against the stones of the thirty-two Paths[1] and caused the wind to gather many waters into one place. Then fifty gates of understanding were opened. From the Paths emanated ten luminous crowns, and there were left twenty-two Paths. The wind whirled down those Paths and fifty Gates of Understanding were opened, and the twenty-two letters were engraved upon fifty gates of the Jubilee and were crowned with the seventy-two letters of the Holy Name. These opened out sideways in their turn and were crowned with the twenty-two crowns of Compassion which are contained in the Ancient of Days, who bestows light upon them, to each according to its place. Fifty engraved letters also were crowned with forty-two supernal letters of the Holy Name, by which heaven and earth were created. And eight gates were opened, which are the eight significations of Mercy, as it is written: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious", etc. (Ex. XXXIV, 6–7), which emanate from the Holy Ancient and proceed to the Microprosopus, and they unite with those holy crowns, Supernal Wisdom and Understanding, taking Supernal Grace from the one side and Judgement or Power from the other. Then came the merit of Jacob and synthetized both and made them one, for he signifies supernal harmony.' R. Simeon added, so we are told, that on that account Jacob was called Israel, because "Jacob" symbolizes that which is below, "Israel" that which is above; "Jacob" betokens incompleteness, "Israel" is the completion of all. Said R. Judah: 'When Wisdom began to cause the shaping of Crowns,[2] with which Crown did it commence? With that which is called "Understanding" (*Binah*), for in Understanding all is contained; and therefore fifty gates are opened in its name, and thus it is found that all the letters and all the crowns are engraved in Wisdom. Therefore it is written: "Thou hast made them all in Wisdom" (Ps. CIV, 24). It is written: "Who hath measured the water in the hollow of his

[1] i.e. the ten *Sefiroth* and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet; cf. Sefer Yezirah. [2] i.e. *Sefiroth*.

hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ?" (Isa. XL, 12). "The water" here symbolizes "Understanding".' R. Eleazar referred it to "Grace", whereupon R. Simeon said to him: 'The two views are equivalent. "Heaven" symbolizes "Beauty" (*Tifereth*), and "dust" refers to "Power" (*Geburah*). "Mountains" refers to the other crowns which are called "Mountains of pure balsam", and "hills" alludes to somewhat lower chariots.' [176*a*] Said R. Eleazar: 'It would seem that Jacob emanated from the region of severe Judgement, for Isaac laid hold on this attribute as his portion.' Said R. Simeon to him: 'But was this the only grade ? Isaac emanated from Grace, surely, and so did all the Fathers. In fact, Judgement proceeds from Mercy, and Mercy from Judgement. Abraham inherited Mercy, and Isaac proceeded therefrom, but with the aura of Judgement about him; and Jacob in turn issued in Mercy from the midst of Judgement. So one quality emanates from another, each imbibes from each, and finally it is made manifest that all are one, and all depend on One, and the One is all in all. Blessed be His Name for ever and ever.' Said R. Eleazar: 'It is evident that there can be no perfection except the one aspect be joined to the other and a third hold them together to harmonize and complete them, like Jacob in relation to Abraham and Isaac. That is why it is written: "And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall be fastening from one end to the other." We have been taught that all this differentiation of the Divine Personality is from our side and relative to our knowledge, and that, above, all is one, all is set in one balance, unvarying and eternal, as it is written: "I the Lord change not" (Mal. III, 6).' Said R. Judah: 'All the heavenly lights are illumined from one and depend on one, and all the lights there form only one Light, and desire never to be separated, and he who does separate them in his mind is as though he separated himself from life eternal.' Said R. Isaac: 'It is written, "And I will give youths to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them" (Isa. III, 4). This is an allusion to the words, "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold"

(Ex. XXV, 18). It is also written: "The ark of the Lord which dwelleth between the cherubims" (1 Sam. IV, 4); and again it is written, "And he rode upon a cherub" (2 Sam. XXII, 11). When He dwells in completeness, He "dwelleth between cherubims", but when the King is not established on His Throne, He "rides" on "one" cherub. Said R. Jose: 'Woe unto the world when one cherub turns away his face from the other, for it is written, "And their faces shall look one to another" (Ex. XXV, 20); only then is there harmony in the world.' Said R. Isaac: 'We have been taught that the words, "The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover" (Lev. XVIII, 7) have an esoteric reference to supermundane relationships in addition to their obvious significance. Woe to him who "uncovers their nakedness" (by probing too deeply into the hidden mysteries of the inner aspects of the Divine Essence and the relationship of one to another). Similarly, it is written in regard to Jacob: "fastening from one end to the other". Happy is the lot of Israel, by whose praises the Holy One, blessed be He, is glorified even as He is glorified above: "Israel in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3).'

We have been taught that R. Isaac once said: 'In bygone times a person used to say to his neighbour, "Speak to me on a certain portion of the Torah and I will pay thee for it"; but in our days, even if one person says to another, "Study the Torah and I will reward thee with money for so doing", no one inclines his ears to listen, and none desires knowledge except those few saints of the Highest in whom the Holy One is glorified, and concerning whom it is written, "And thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (*Ibid.* LX, 21).'

THE HOOKS OF THE PILLARS AND THEIR FILLETS SHALL BE OF SILVER. Said R. Isaac: 'I presume that the "hooks of the pillars" symbolize all those who are attached to the supernal unifying pillars,[1] and that all those who are below depend on them. What is the significance of the word

[1] i.e. Nezah and Hod, who are attached to the three *Sefiroth* above them.

vavim (hooks; also the letter *vau*, the numerical value of which is six)? Six within six (*vv*), all united and nourished by the Spine which is set over them. And we have learnt in the Book of the Hidden Mystery (*Sifra di-ẓeniutha*) this dictum: "Hooks above, hooks below (six above, six below), all comprehended in one meaning and one name, having one and the same significance." Now, what is this "Book of the Hidden Mystery"?' Said R. Simeon: 'It contains five sections which are to be found in the midst of a great Hall, and whose wisdom fills the whole earth.' Said R. Judah: 'If this book of wisdom is enclosed in that Hall, it is of more worth than any other tome.' 'Verily,' returned R. Simeon, 'it is so, for one who is used to passing in and out of the courts of wisdom, but not to one who rarely or never enters into that Hall. Once there was a man who dwelt among the mountains and was a complete stranger to the ways of townsfolk. He sowed wheat, but knew no better than to consume it in its natural condition. One day he went down into a city, and there a loaf of good bread was placed before him. He asked what it was, and was informed that it was bread and was meant to eat. He ate it and liked it. "What is it made of?" he said. They told him "Wheat". Later, he was given fine cake kneaded in oil. He tasted it, and again asked: "And this, of what is it made?" The same reply was made as before: "Of wheat". Finally, he was treated to some royal confectionery, flavoured with oil and honey. Once more he asked his question, and obtained the same reply. Then he said: "In sooth, I have all these at my command, because I eat the essential constituent of all, namely wheat." Thus, through his untutored taste he remained a stranger to all these delicious flavours, and their enjoyment was lost to him. Even so it is with those who stop short at the general principles of knowledge because they are ignorant of the delights which may be derived from the further investigation and application of those principles.'[1]

[1] Pp. 177*b*–179*a* belong to the Sifra di-Ẓeniutha. *v.* Introduction, vol. I, p. xii.

TEZAWE

Ex. XXVII, 20–XXVIII,1

AND THOU SHALT COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: . . . AND THOU BRING NEAR UNTO THEE AARON THY BROTHER. Said R. Ḥiya: 'What is the significance of the expression "and thou" in these and other passages, e.g., "And thou shalt speak unto all that are of a wise heart" (XXVIII, 3); "And thou take unto thee principal spices" (Ex. XXX, 23)? In all cases it contains a reference to the supernal world, indicating that the Shekinah is joined with Moses.' Said R. Isaac: 'The upper and the lower lights, when united, are designated "and thou", as, for instance, in the passage, "and thou givest life to them all". Therefore it does not say merely "Command", "Take unto thee", "speak", etc., but prefixes the words "And thou", because at the time of the building of the Tabernacle the Sun united with the Moon, and all the divine aspects were merged into one Whole which should rest upon the holy place and bless the work of its construction.' R. Eleazar derived the same inference from the words: "Then wrought Bezalel . . . and every wise-hearted man, in whom the Lord put *wisdom* and *understanding*" (Ex. XXXVII, 1). Said R. Simeon: 'It can also be proved from the verse, "And thou shalt speak unto all that are of a wise heart, to him whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom." Instead of "to him", we should have expected "to them", but the singular form refers to the "heart", which He has filled with the spirit of wisdom, as it is written: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding", etc. (Isa. XI, 2). Therefore it was necessary to say, "Him whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom", in order to show that the Sun united with the Moon in an all-embracing completeness. For the same reason "and thou" is used in all the cases which we have considered.' Said R. Eleazar: 'How, then, are all the passages beginning with "and thou" to be understood?' R. Simeon replied: 'In this way: "And thou bring

near unto thee Aaron"—to join and unite with him in fitting manner the mystery of the Holy Name; "And thou shalt speak unto all that are of a wise heart": this indicates that none of them came to do the work of Aaron's vestments before the Holy Spirit spoke in them bidding them begin: "And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring pure oil . . . for the light"—this indicates that it was the Holy Spirit which urged them to do this and shed its light upon them that they might perform the work with all their heart; "And thou take unto thee principal spices"—this has the same significance as "And thou bring near unto thee Aaron". In fact, all the repetitions of the phrase "and thou" which occur in connection with the work of the Tabernacle contain this implication.'

R. Simeon spoke on the verse: "And thou, O Lord, be not far from me; O my strength, haste thou to help me" (Ps. XXII, 20). Said he: 'The two invocations, "And thou, O Lord", are in effect one. "Be not far", that is, do not soar away from us aloft, to remove the upper Light from the lower, for when the one separates from the other all light is darkened and removed from the world. For this cause, indeed, was the Temple destroyed in the time of Jeremiah, and although it was afterwards restored, that Light did not even then return to its place with the same fulness and perfection as before. The very name of that prophet signifies the "going up on high" (Jeremiah; lit. God shall be exalted) of the supernal light, and its continued absence from its place in the earthly sanctuary. Jeremiah himself was removed and never returned to his place, and the Temple was destroyed and the light was darkened; but Isaiah's very name ("The Salvation of the Lord") is the cause of future redemption and the return of the supernal light to its place and the restoration of the Temple and all the splendour and glory thereof. Therefore the names of these two prophets are thus differentiated, because the name is of great significance and potency, and the combination of letters one with the other operates either for good or for evil. Connected with this mystery is the combination of the letters of the holy names,

and even the letters in themselves can be made to reveal supreme mysteries.' [181a][1]

THAT HE MAY MINISTER UNTO ME IN THE PRIEST'S OFFICE. Said R. Simeon: 'Moses did not make use of the Moon until he was completed on all sides in the mystery of the *vau* (six),[2] as elsewhere explained. This is indicated by the superfluous *vau* at the end of *le-khahano* (to be a priest). The word *li* (to me) indicates that the *vau* (*Tifereth*) was to make use of the *hé* (*Malkuth*), that all might be one. Blessed are the Israelites [181b] who "entered and came out" and comprehended the mystery of the ways of the Torah, to walk in the way of truth. "From among the children of Israel", because only from there is unity possible, for the children of Israel stand here below as emissaries of the Most High, to open the gates, to shed light upon the ways, to kindle the radiance of the heavenly fire, to draw all things that are below near to them that are above, in order that all may become a unity. Therefore it is written: "And ye who cleave to the Lord your God, ye are all alive to-day".' R. Simeon further said: 'In all things there is a "drawing near" for him who understands how to accomplish the union and to worship the Lord, for when the sacrifice is offered in manner due, all grades are brought near as one unity, and the light of the Countenance is present in the world, in the Sanctuary, and the "other side" is subdued and covered in, and the side of holiness reigns in all as light and joy. But when the sacrifice is not offered in manner due, and the union is not effected, this Countenance is overcast and the light is not present, the Moon is in hiding, and the "other side" reigns, because there is no one who knows how to unify the Holy Name in the proper fashion.'[3] [182a]

'It is written:[4] "Thou shalt not make to thee molten

[1] The passage omitted deals with the symbolism of the shapes of certain Hebrew letters, and is unsuitable for translation.

[2] i.e. until he obtained a perfect cognition of the *Sefirah Tifereth*.

[3] Here follows in the original a passage about Job which is reproduced with only slight variations from Zohar, Exodus, 34a.

[4] The section from here to p. 187b seems to be out of place, and to belong properly to the portion Ki Tisa.

gods", and immediately after, "the feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep" (Ex. XXXIV, 17, 18). What connection is there between the two precepts? We have been taught concerning this matter as follows: If one eats leaven during the Passover, it is as though he worshipped idols. For when Israel went out from Egypt they emerged from the dominion of the Egyptians, from that dominion which is called "leaven"; for the "evil inclination" operates in man and grows in him like leaven in the dough: it enters into him, and, little by little, extends its influence until his whole self is permeated by it. This is idolatry, concerning which it is written, "Let there be no strange god in thee" (Ps. LXXXI, 10).'

R. Judah discoursed in connection with this theme on the words: "Cease ye from man, whose breath (*neshamah*) is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. II, 22). 'This verse,' said he, 'has already been explained; but what is the particular significance of the expression, "cease ye from man"? Must one, then, avoid any intercourse with men? If that were so, there would be no social life whatsoever, and assuredly it was not thus ordained! It has, however, been expounded as applying to the man who rises up early to pay court to his neighbour (instead of going to prayers), which thought I have connected with another verse, namely: "He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him" (Prov. XXVII, 14). But although this explanation is satisfactory as far as it goes, the question still remains, What is the meaning of the expression, "Whose breath (*neshamah*) is in his nostrils"? It is this: the Holy One commands man to guard himself against those men who have turned from the good to the evil way, and have polluted their souls by the impurity of the "other side". For, when the Holy One created man, He made him on the supernal pattern and breathed into him a holy breath consisting of a triad, as has already been established, whose several names are *nephesh*, *ruah*, and *neshamah*, the highest being the *neshamah*, for it is the superior energy by means of which man can apprehend and keep the commandments of the Holy One. But when he lets his soul participate in the "strange worship", he defiles

that soul and departs from the worship and the ways of his Lord. For these three aspects of the soul, *nephesh*, *ruah*, and *neshamah*, are all one, being merged one in the other on the pattern of the supernal mystery. And when we see a man who possesses all these three grades untarnished and firmly established therein, we may know that he is a complete man, a faithful servant of his Master; and with such a one we may safely associate in order to learn from him his way of life. And how is one to discern whether a person is one whose acquaintance is to be cultivated or shunned? By his temper; for by his demeanour when roused to anger can his character be discerned. If he guards the holy soul when he is wroth, in order that it may not be uprooted from its place, and supplanted by the "other side", then he is indeed a man, a servant of his Lord, complete and holy. But one who in his ire cares nothing for the welfare of his soul, uprooting it and letting it be replaced by the impure domination, such a man is a rebel against his Lord, one with whom we should shun contact of any kind, for he is one who, as it is written, "teareth his soul in his anger" (Job XVIII, 4)—he tears and uproots his soul in his heedless rage, and allows a "strange god" to usurp its place within him and to take possession of him in its stead. Thus the words, "Cease ye from a man whose soul is torn in his anger" (*aph* = anger as well as nostril), are obviously an injunction to refrain from intercourse with him who tears the holy soul and defiles it in his anger. [182b] "For wherein (*ba-meh*) is he to be accounted for?"—such a one is "accounted" an "idol" (*bamah*, lit. "high place"), and to associate oneself with such a person is like associating with idolatry. And not only that: such a person has also uprooted holiness from its place and raised in its stead a "strange god" there; and as in regard to a "strange god" it is written: "Do not turn to idols" (Lev. XIX, 4), so it is prohibited to look on the face of such a person in his anger. As to the question, What about the anger of students of the Torah? that anger is good in all its aspects, since, as we have been taught, the Torah is fire, and it is she who kindles that holy anger in her devotees, as it is written, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord"

(Jer. XXIII, 29). The anger of scholars is for offences against the Torah, it is in her honour, it is for the sake of the Holy One's glory and majesty. Therefore it says: "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, he is a zealous God" (Deut. IV, 24). But if a person becomes angry over purely secular matters, this is no service of God, and no sin that man commits is so literally idolatry as this, since it actually sets up an idol in the very heart of him who is angered: unto such a man one is forbidden to speak or draw nigh. Should one say, But, after all, this anger is only a momentary impulse from which he may soon repent—why, then, such severity as this? the answer would be, that in reality it is not thus, because he has uprooted the holiness of his soul from its place and the "other god" has entrenched himself therein, and will never leave him until by a great effort the person so afflicted completely purifies himself and roots out from his inner self that evil, and thereafter endeavours to sanctify himself afresh, and to draw down holiness from above upon himself; then only can there be a possibility of renewal and sanctification for him.' Said R. Jose to him: 'Why only a possibility of renewal and sanctification?' R. Judah replied: 'Consider this: when a man uproots the holiness of his soul and is given admission to that "strange god" in its place—the "strange god" which is called "impure"—that man has become polluted and he pollutes everyone with whom he comes into contact, and holiness flees from him; and, holiness having once fled, whatever the person may do afterwards, it will not return to its place again.' Said R. Jose: 'And yet, how many who had defiled themselves are purified!' R. Judah replied: 'But anger, in contradistinction to sins which pollute only the body, pollutes also the soul and, in fact, the whole being. Therefore one must beware of such a man and must "keep the feast of unleavened bread", that is, the side of holiness within, and not exchange it for the "other side" to pollute oneself and others.

[1] "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep (*tishmor*). Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I have commanded thee" (Ex. XXXIV, 18). This is the sphere called *shamor* (keep = Kingdom, the "Feminine" emanation),

therefore it says in regard to this feast, "keep". These "seven days" are not like the seven days of the feast of Tabernacles, which latter are "upper" days (belonging to the world of "Understanding"), whilst the former are "lower" days (belonging to the world of "Kingdom"). Therefore, on the feast of Tabernacles the full "Hallel"[1] is recited, whilst on that of Passover (after the first day) only a part of it[2] is recited. It may be asked, After the feast of the Passover has been sanctified (on the first day), why is there a descent to a lower plane on the succeeding days? Is there not an ancient rule that "in holy things there must be continual progress upward, not regression downward"? Why, then, is not the "complete" Hallel said on the remaining six days of the feast? Why does the sanctification "come down" in these "lower" days? The answer would be as follows: It is written concerning the High Priest: "And he should make an atonement for himself and for his house" (Lev. XVI, 6); from which it is clear that he, being the medium of propitiation, must first make atonement on his own behalf and then be the means of atonement for his household. The same applies here: the grade of the Passover feast began to be sanctified first (on the first day), and having been sanctified itself required to sanctify its household, and for this reason it "came down". And what is the instrument of that sanctification? Israel which is below, when she counts the days of the Omer (from the second night of Passover until the night of Pentecost). And when these have been sanctified, this grade must be raised in order to ascend above, for when the house of the Matrona (Israel, the "bearer" of the Shekinah) is sanctified, it ascends to the upper region in order to unite itself with those "higher" days [183a] above (on the Feast of Weeks). Therefore we have to count the days of the Omer standing, because these are "high" days. So, also, whenever a man enters into those "high" days, whether it be with prayers or hymns of praise, he must pray or sing standing, his thighs taut, his feet firm, his body erect: the attitude of a man, instinct with power, as distinct from the characteristic

[1] i.e. Ps. CXIII–CXVIII in full. [2] i.e. the same psalms with the omission of Ps. CXV, 1–11, and CXVI, 1–11.

attitude of a woman, which is sitting. Another reason for standing is that the counting of the days of the Omer signifies praise-giving to the upper world. And because the counting of the Omer is part of the mystery of the world of Masculinity, therefore it is not obligatory for women, for it is only the men who are obliged to count, in order to unite all the attributes according to the Divine purpose. Similarly it is written (in regard to the pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the three festivals): "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God" (Ex. XXIII, 16)—males but not females, because the mystery of the Covenant applies to males but not to females; therefore the command to "appear" being bound up with that supernal mystery, women are not obliged to keep it. We have also learnt in this connection the mystery, that from every seven of those "high" days, one day of the lower days receives holiness, and that day is called *Shabu'a* (week),[1] because it was sanctified by the seven "supernal" days. And so it is with all the sevens of the fifty days (between the second night of Passover and the night of Pentecost), or rather the forty-nine days, and as there are forty-nine supernal days, seven days below are sanctified, and every one of these days is called "week", because it ascends by means of those seven. Therefore it is written, "Seven complete weeks they shall be" (Lev. XXIII, 15). Because they (i.e. the "lower" days) are of the Feminine grade they are designated by a feminine form (*sheba'* instead of *shib'ah*). And when they have been sanctified by them (i.e. by the supernal days), and the "House" has been prepared, so that the Wife (the Shekinah) may be united with her Spouse, then it is called "The Feast of Weeks" (Pentecost), because of the "lower" days which have been hallowed by the "higher". Therefore it is written: "In *your* weeks" (Num. XXVIII, 26), because they are "yours", as Israel is also sanctified with them. Hence, when forty-nine days have been reached and passed, the fiftieth day, which reigns over them, symbolizes the mystery of the Torah (given on that day), which possesses forty-nine aspects; and this

[1] Alluding to the fact that in the counting of the Omer the weeks are mentioned as well as the days.

day, by means of the impulse from below, brought forth the Torah complete with forty-nine aspects.' R. Eleazar quoted in this connection the verse: "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow (*deror*) a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at thy altars" (Ps. LXXXIV, 4). 'Of the birds of heaven,' he said, 'some make their dwellings outside (in the open) and some inside human habitations: as, for instance, the swallow, which makes her dwelling in a house, and is not afraid. Why? Because all call it "*deror*". And what, then, is the meaning of *deror*? Freedom, as it is written, "Ye should proclaim *deror*", and the Aramaic translation of *deror* is *ḥeru* (Freedom). These swallows make a nest in a house and bring forth little ones and dwell in that house for fifty days and then separate and go each its own way and to whatsoever place it desires, all being free. Similarly, it is written: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom throughout all the land" (Lev. XXV, 10). Freedom emanates from this fiftieth year to all, and because of this the Torah which proceeded from that fiftieth day is called "Freedom". Concerning this it is written, "Graven (*ḥaruth*) upon the tablets", which word *ḥaruth* contains the same letters as *ḥeruth*, which is Freedom, and the Decalogue, which is the essence of the Law, is thus given its due appellation, because whatever this supernal day brings forth is called "Freedom". It is the freedom of all things, of all spheres, of all worlds and of all created beings, both above and below.

'The children of Israel ate, when they left Egypt, two kinds of bread: one on their leaving, unleavened bread, the "bread of affliction"; and the other in the wilderness, "bread from heaven" (Ex. XVI, 4). Therefore the essential sacrifice of the day (Pentecost, when the Torah was given) was bread (Lev. XXIII, 17), and the others were additional to this, as it is written: "And ye shall offer with the bread some lambs", etc. (*Ibid.* 18), for this was the bread by means of which the Israelites were endowed with the superior wisdom of the Torah, and entered into her ways.

'Now one has to consider: On the Passover the Israelites emerged from their subsistence on the [spiritual] bread called

"leaven"[183b] to be nourished by the more honourable bread called *Maẓẓah* (unleavened). Now, when the Israelites were worthy (on the Day of Pentecost) to eat a more excellent bread, would it not have been more appropriate that the "leaven" should have been abolished altogether and not been in evidence at all? Why, then, was that sacrifice based chiefly on leavened bread, as it is written: "They (the two loaves) shall be baken with leaven" (Lev. XXIII, 17)? Moreover, on that day (Pentecost) the "evil inclination" (leaven) came to naught, and the Torah, called "Freedom", was then given. We may, however, explain by the following parable. A king had an only son who fell seriously ill. After a time the prince expressed a desire to eat, but he was forbidden to eat any food other than that prescribed by the physicians, and orders were given that for the set term of that diet no other viands should be found in the palace. All was carried out accordingly. But when the prince was come to the end of the period of his special diet the ban was lifted, and it was intimated that now he was free to eat whatsoever he fancied, since it would not harm him. Similarly, when the Israelites came out from Egypt they knew not the essence and mystery of the Faith. Said the Holy One: "Let them taste only the medicinal food, and before they have finished it be shown no other food soever." But when the *maẓẓoth* were finished, which was the medicine by means of which they were to enter and to comprehend the mystery of the Faith, then the Holy One proclaimed: "From now on they may see and eat leavened bread, because it cannot harm them"—especially on the Day of Pentecost, when the supernal bread, which is a cure of all ills, was prepared for them. Therefore leaven was offered to be burnt on the altar,[1] and two other loaves were offered with it, and the leaven was burnt by the fire of the altar, and it could not reign over and do harm to Israel. Therefore holy Israel cleaves to the Holy One, blessed be He, on this day (Pentecost), and if the Israelites had but preserved the two sides (symbols) of the two loaves they would never have been subjected to chastisement.

[1] According to the Talmud, the two loaves of leaven were to be eaten by the priests.

'New Year's Day is a day of judgement for those who have not accepted the healing food, and have neglected the "medicine" of the Torah for the sake of another food, which is leaven. For on this day that "leaven" ascends and accuses mankind and speaks evil against all whom it can malign in any wise. And at that time the Holy One, blessed be He, sits in judgement over all and pronounces His decrees in regard to all the spheres. Therefore, when He gave the Torah to Israel He gave them to taste of that supernal bread of the celestial realm, namely, the manna, by means of which they were enabled to perceive and penetrate into the mysteries of the Torah and to walk in the straight path. However, this subject has been elucidated by the Companions, in connection with the mysteries to which we have already referred.'

R. Simeon and his son, R. Eleazar, were out walking one day, accompanied by R. Abba and R. Jose. As they went along, they beheld ahead of them an old man, who led by the hand a young child. R. Simeon, on perceiving them, exclaimed, turning to R. Abba: 'Assuredly, we shall hear new and instructive expositions from that old man.' So they walked on more quickly, and presently overtook the couple. When they approached the old man, R. Simeon said to him: 'Thou travellest in heavy garments. Who art thou?' The stranger replied: 'I am a Jew.' Said R. Simeon: 'Verily we shall hear new interpretations to-day from thee. Whence art thou?' The old man answered: 'I was wont until but lately to live retired from the world, a recluse in the desert, where I studied the Torah and meditated on sacred matters, but now I am come into the midst of the habitation of men, to sit in the shadow of the Holy One in these days of the seventh month.' R. Simeon rejoiced and said: 'Let us sit down, for verily the Holy One has sent thee to us. By thy life, we shall hear words from thy mouth of those which have been planted in the desert concerning this seventh month. But why art thou now so far from thy place of retirement, and why bent upon fixing thy dwelling elsewhere? The old man replied: 'From this question I can see that thou lackest not wisdom, and that indeed thy words reach the firmament of wisdom itself.' Then he began to speak as

follows: 'It is written: "And in the wilderness where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son in all the way that ye went, until ye came unto this place" (Deut. I, 31). This verse ought surely to run: "And in the wilderness where the Lord thy God bare thee"; what is the significance of the words "where thou hast seen"? The answer is as follows. The Holy One led Israel through a terrible wilderness "wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions" (*Ibid.* VIII, 15); indeed, the most fearful wilderness in the world. Why did He do this ? Because in the hour when they left [184a] Egypt and increased to the number of sixty myriad souls, the Holy Kingdom was strengthened and stood firm, high above all, and the Moon was illumined, and thus the wicked dominion, the "other side", was subdued, and the Holy One brought the Israelites out in order to lead them through the terrible wilderness, the very realm and domain of Samael the wicked, in order that the evil power might be broken and the ruler of the regions of darkness be crushed, that it might rear its head no more. Had the Israelites not sinned, the Holy One would have resolved to remove him altogether from the world. Therefore He led them through his very dominion and territory. But when they sinned the serpent stung them many a time, and then was fulfilled that which was written: "He shall bruise thy head (*rosh*) and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. III, 15)—that is to say, Israel *first* (*be-rosh*) bruised his head, but because later they knew not how to guard themselves against him he finally smote them and they all fell dead in the wilderness, and then the other half of the verse was fulfilled: "and thou (i.e. the serpent) shalt bruise his heel". And forty years long were they chastised by him, which corresponded to the forty lashes of the judges. Therefore it says: "where thou hast *seen*". They *saw* with their own eyes the prince of the desert, a prisoner bound before them, and they took his lot and possession. And so I also separated myself from the haunts of men and departed to dwell in the desert in order to be able better to meditate upon the Torah and to subdue that "other side." Besides, the words of the Torah can best sink into the soul there in the desert, for

there is no light except that which issues from darkness, for when that "other side" is subdued the Holy One is exalted in glory. In fact, there can be no true worship except it issue forth from darkness, and no true good except it proceed from evil. And when a man enters upon an evil way and then forsakes it the Holy One is exalted in glory. Hence the perfection of all things is attained when good and evil are first of all commingled, and then become all good, for there is no good so perfect as that which issues out of evil. The divine Glory is extolled and extended thereby, and therein lies the essence of perfect worship. And as for us, we remained in the desert throughout all the days of the year in order to subdue there that "other side", but now, when the time for the divine worship from the side of holiness has come, we return to an inhabited place where the worship of the Holy One is carried on. Moreover, now in the season of the New Year the time has come for that serpent to demand justice from the Holy One, and he rules there at present, and therefore we went away from there and are come to an inhabited place.'

The old man then proceeded to discourse on the verse: "Blow the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed on our solemn feast-day" (Ps. LXXXI, 4). He said: 'Now is the time when the mighty supernal judgement is awakened, and with it the "other side" also gathers force. And with this access of force it ascends and veils the Moon that She may no more shine, and She falls entirely under the influence of stern Justice. Then all the worlds and spheres come under the ægis of judgement, both celestial and terrestrial beings, and a herald makes proclamation throughout all the firmaments, saying: "Prepare the Throne of Judgement for the Lord of all, since He cometh to judge all worlds !" Here is a mystery which was revealed to us during our sojourn in the desert. Why is supernal justice roused to activity just on this day ? Because all mysteries and all glorious sanctifications are centred in the mystery of seven. And the supernal Seventh, the upper world, called "the world to come", is the realm whence all lights derive their brightness. And when the time arrives when those blessings and sanctifications are

to be renewed with fresh light, all the conditions in the different worlds are passed in review. Then all these preparations ascend from earth if they are fitting, but if not, then it is decreed that the Moon is not to shine till the sinners have been separated from the righteous. Then judgement is awakened, and from that judgement the "other side" gains strength, and the Accuser demands that the wicked should be delivered unto him—for concerning him it is written, "He searcheth out all extremities" (Job. XXVIII, 3); and he causes the light of the Moon to be concealed, as we have said. And why are the wicked not delivered into that Accuser's hands? Because it is not the will of the Holy One to destroy His handiwork. But that "other side" is encased in a powerful shell which cannot be broken, except by means of that counsel which the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to Israel when He said: "Blow the trumpet in the new moon, in the covering (*ba-kese*) of our solemn feast-day", in order to break that "covering" (*kese*) which prevents the Moon from shining. And when the Israelites blow the trumpet here below the voice thereof smites the air and breaks through all firmaments until it reaches the mighty rock which covers up the Moon through the evil power of the "other side", and when Satan, who has ascended and stands above, perceives that Mercy has been roused [184*b*] he becomes confused, and the trumpet's voice causes the strength of the Accuser to depart from him, and the voice of judgement to be hushed and rigorous punishments to be revoked. And when Mercy is roused from below another supernal trumpet is roused and brings forth a voice, which is Mercy, in the upper sphere, and voice meets voice, and the awakening below causes an awakening above. If it should be asked, how the awakening below can have such an effect on the higher sphere, the answer is this. The lower world is always in a receptive state—being called "a good (precious) stone"—and the upper world only communicates to it according to the condition in which it is found at any given time. If it shows a smiling countenance, light and joy from the world above pour down upon it; but if it be sad and downcast, it receives the severity of judgement, as it is written, "Worship

the Lord in joy" (Ps. C, 2), that the joy of man may draw down upon him supernal joy. So, too, does the lower sphere affect the upper: according to the degree of awakening below there is awakening and heavenly joy above. Therefore the Israelites haste to awaken the voice of the trumpet, which is compounded of fire, water, and wind, and all are made one and the voice ascends and strikes that "precious stone", which then receives the various colours of this voice and then draws down upon itself the attribute from above, according to the colour which it shows. And when it is duly prepared by this voice, Mercy issues from on high and rests upon it, so that it is enfolded in mercy, both above and below. Then is the "other side" thrown into confusion, and its power weakened, so that it lacks the strength to accuse, and the "precious stone" is lit up on both sides, from below and from above. And when is that light shed from the world above upon the ways of men? Verily, on the Day of Atonement. On that day the "precious stone" is illumined with the light from above, which emanates from the splendour of the world to come. Therefore Israel prepare a goat here below for the Day of Atonement and send it forth to that terrible desert which is under the dominion of the Accuser. That "other side" is the central point of the waste places of the world, just as the central point of the whole inhabited world is occupied by the "holy side", and therefore Jerusalem is in the centre of the inhabited world. The kingdom of heaven, which is the side of holiness, is fixed at two points, one its own and one belonging to the world to come. The upper point is hidden, and therefore it has two points. Under its own point is Jerusalem, the centre of the inhabited world. The point which takes from the hidden supernal Mother is the terrestrial Paradise, which is in the centre of the whole world. In the centre of this Paradise there is a hidden supernal point which is not manifested, and a pillar rises within that point from below, and from thence issue waters which spread to all four sides of the world. Thus there are three points which stand one upon the other, like the three sections of the Torah (Law, Prophets, Writings).

'Observe this: the goat which the Israelites sent down to

Azazel, into that desert, was sent with the intention of giving to the "other side" a portion, so pacifying and keeping it occupied that it might not do harm to the sons of the Kingdom. But it may be objected: "Why, then, was it necessary to have two goats, one "to the Lord" and one to the "other side" ? The answer to this question can be gathered from the following parable. A king once became angered with his son, and he called to that minister whose office it was to punish offenders that he might be at hand to chastise his son on the morrow. The minister, in high spirits, was overjoyed, and entered the palace to partake of food there. The prince, on seeing him, thought to himself: "Surely, that man comes here to no good purpose, but doubtless because my father is angry with me." So what did he do ? He straightway went in unto his father and persuaded him to forgive him. Then the king commanded that a banquet should be prepared for him and his son, but that the minister should not be told thereof, for, he thought to himself, should he get wind of the repast which I have ordered [185a] for myself and my son, he will disturb our meal. What, then, did the king do ? He called to his chamberlain and said unto him: "Prepare first a meal for this minister, in order that he may imagine that I am showing him a mark of special favour by giving a banquet in his honour, and so be satisfied and depart, without knowing anything of the previous meal which I have commanded thee to prepare, and which we shall consume when he is gone. Therefore let him, as I have said, take his part and then go, that our joy may be complete and undisturbed." And so it was done. Now, if the king had not dealt thus with his minister and his son, the former would not have left the palace, and the feast of forgiveness would have been marred. Similarly, the Holy One said to Israel: "Prepare ye two goats, one for Me and one for that Accuser, in order that he may imagine that he is participating in My meal, but in reality may be quite unaware of the true meal of our joy. Let him take his part and go his way and leave My house." As the "supernal Mother", the world to come, comes down to dwell in the palace of the lower world in order that all faces should be lit up there, it is meet that the

Accuser should not be found in its holy presence, neither he nor any other of the ministers of judgement, when it dispenses blessings and radiates light upon all things and freedom unto all creatures, and Israel takes of these blessings. For when the "world to come" enters into its palace, the lower world, and finds that it rejoices with its children in the most excellent meal, it blesses the table, and all the worlds are blessed, and all is joy and radiant looks. Therefore it says (in regard to the Day of Atonement):' "That ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Lev. XVI, 30). It is written: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel". This gives the Accuser great joy : that God should take a lot with him, and, as it were, invite him by the Holy One's own desire and invitation. But he little realizes how that the Lord heaps coals of fire on his head and upon the heads of all his legions. Haman, too, "went forth that day joyful and with a glad heart" (Esther V, 9)—namely, with that portion which was given him. But when the Supernal King comes in unto the Matrona She pleads before the King for Herself, for Her children, for Her people, and even when Israel is in exile, if they pray all this day long (on the Day of Atonement), She ascends unto the Supernal King and pleads for Her children, whereby all the punishments which the Holy One is about to inflict upon Edom (Rome) are decreed and fixed, and, in addition, those concerning the unsuspecting Accuser himself —for though he knows it not, he is destined to be done away with, as it is written, "And death will be swallowed up for ever" (Isa. XXV, 8). So Esther said: "For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed . . . for the enemy could not countervail the king's damage" (*Ibid.* VII, 4). And then: "Haman was frightened before the presence of the King and the queen" (*Ibid.* VII, 6). Then radiant looks and perfect joy prevail, and Israel enters into freedom on that day. And from that day on freedom and joy reign manifestly over them, and the Holy One wills to associate Himself with them in joy thenceforward. And as the Israelites gave Satan a portion in order that he might leave them alone and in peace, so also did they give a portion to the pagan nations (the

offering of seventy oxen on the Feast of Tabernacles for the seventy nations) in order that they might leave them alone here on earth below.'[1] [187a]

R. Simeon wept and rejoiced. Then they lifted up their eyes and saw five persons approaching, who were evidently disciples of the old man, since they followed him as though seeking to speak with him. They all rose and R. Simeon turned to him and said: 'And now, what is thy name?' He replied: 'Old Nehorai is my name: I am so known to distinguish me from another Nehorai who is among us.' R. Simeon and his companions then walked on with him a distance of three miles, accompanied by the five newcomers, to whom R. Simeon said: 'For what have you come here?' They answered: 'We came to find this old man, the waters of whose wisdom we imbibe in the desert.' Then came R. Simeon and kissed the old man and said: '*Nehorai* is thy name, and light (*nehara*) dwells with thee indeed!' Then he turned to the Companions, and said: 'He revealeth the deep and secret things; and He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him" (Dan. II, 22). Why does He reveal them? Because He knows what is in the darkness; for, were it not for darkness we would not know what light is. "And light dwelleth with Him." What light is that? It is the light [187b] which is revealed out of darkness. And as to us, out of the darkness of the great wilderness this great light has risen to enlighten us. May the Merciful One let His light dwell with thee in this world and the world to come.' R. Simeon and his companions then journeyed with the old man for a further three miles, and then he asked him: 'Why did not thy five disciples accompany thee from the first?' He replied: 'I did not wish anyone to be troubled on my account, but from henceforth they shall go along with me, seeing that they have come.' Then they went their way, and R. Simeon his. Presently R. Abba said: 'Now we know

[1] The next two pages in the original, dealing in further detail with the goat and the purifying effects of the Day of Atonement and the resulting joyousness of the Feast of Tabernacles, are made up mainly of fragments which belong in reality to other parts of the Zohar and occur in a more complete form elsewhere.

the name of that ancient, but he departed without having learnt the name of the great Master with whom he conversed.' Said R. Simeon: 'I have learnt from him not to tell (without being asked).'

KI TISA

Ex. XXX, 11–XXXIV, 35

AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES SAYING: WHEN THOU TAKEST THE SUM OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AFTER THEIR NUMBER, THEN SHALL THEY GIVE EVERY MAN AN EXPIATION FOR HIS SOUL UNTO THE LORD. It has been laid down that no blessing from above can rest on anything that is counted. Why, then, it may be asked, were the Israelites counted, as we read in this verse? The truth is that an expiation, a ransom, was obtained from them, and the counting did not begin until the whole of that ransom was collected and reckoned up. Moreover, first the Israelites were blessed, then counted, and then again blessed. On account of this double blessing "there was no plague among them" when they were numbered. And why should a plague come when the people are numbered? Because blessing does indeed not rest on what is numbered, and as soon as the power of the blessing has departed the "other side" takes possession and is able to do mischief. Therefore a ransom was taken in order that the counting should be applied to that and not to the people itself. [188a]

R. Jose and R. Ḥiya were once walking together. They went on until darkness fell. Then they sat down and conversed upon many subjects until dawn appeared, when they rose up once more and continued on their way. Said R. Ḥiya: 'Look at the East, how its face begins to lighten! Now all children of the East who inhabit the mountains of light will be worshipping the light which heralds the sun before it appears. For the sun himself has many votaries, but these are the worshippers of his harbinger, which they call "the god of the shining pearl", and their oath is by "Allah of the shining pearl". Yet say not that this worship is idle, for there is a wisdom in it known from former ancient days. When before the rising of the sun the light shines forth, the angel appointed to rule and guide the sun steps forth with the holy letters of the supernal blessed Name inscribed upon his brow, and in the power of those letters opens all the windows of Heaven and flies out. Then he enters into the aura of brightness which surrounds the sun and waits there till the sun himself arises to spread his light over the world. And the same angel who is the guardian of the sun is appointed also over gold and rubies; therefore the sun worshippers and the votaries of dawn worship that angel, and by certain spots and signs which they know from tradition and which they perceive in the sun, they find the place of gold and rubies.'

Said R. Jose 'How long will all these pagan worships continue! Surely, "falsehood has no feet on which to stand!"' R. Ḥiya replied: 'It is written, "The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment" (Prov. XII, 19). Now, if the objects of men's worship were themselves false, it would be as you say. But, in fact, the light and the splendour which we behold are true; the stars aloft in the firmament are true, because men, in their foolishness and lack of sense, mistake these things for God, and call them so, shall God destroy His own work? But in the time that is to be (the Messianic era), not the stars nor the sun will be destroyed, but they who persist in the worship thereof, and this, in fact, is just what the verse implies: "The lips of truth shall be established for ever"—this refers to Israel, who is "the lip of truth", in that she proclaims: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one"—the very essence of truth; and the *Shem'a* concludes with the words, "I the Lord your God am truth". The second half of the verse we may translate not, "a lying tongue is but for a moment (*reg'a*)", but, more literally, "until I, Israel, shall find rest (*argiy'ah*) from my hard burden." For in time to come the lying tongue of those who call that thing "god" which is not God will be destroyed. But of Israel it is written: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise" (Isa. XLIII, 21). I remember walking once with R. Eleazar, and meeting, while on the way, a Gentile worthy (*hegemon*). Said he to R. Eleazar: "You are well acquainted with the Jewish Holy Scriptures?" "I am," replied R. Eleazar. "You say, do you not," proceeded the Gentile, "that your Faith is truth and your Scriptures likewise,

whereas our faith is a lie and our Scriptures a lie also? But it is written in your own Book: 'the lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment'. Now we have been established in our kingdom from ancient times; it has remained with us for generation after generation, and it is 'established for ever'; whereas your kingdom was short-lived and was soon taken from you, and in you were fulfilled the words, 'the lying tongue is but for a moment'." Then said R. Eleazar unto him: "I see that you are well versed in Holy Scripture. A curse light [188*b*] on you! Were it written, '*has been* established', you would be right, but what it says is '*will be* established', which means 'Truth will in the future be established, even if it is not established now'. At present 'the lip of lies' stands erect, and the 'lip of truth' lies prostrate. But in the future truth will rise erect and blossom forth from the midst of the earth." Said the Gentile to him: "You are indeed right, and blessed is the people which possesses the truth, and the Scripture thereof!" Later, I heard that he had become a Jew.'

They then went on till they came to a field, where they halted for prayer. After this they exclaimed: 'From now on let us unite ourselves with the Shekinah and discourse on the Torah as we go.' R. Jose then began by quoting the following verse: "Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded" (Isa. XLI, 11). Said he: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, will in the time to come bring to pass all those good things which He promised Israel through the true prophets, and in the hope of which Israel was able to suffer so much in exile. For were it not for those glorious promises which they see written in the Scripture, and which they await so eagerly, they would have had no strength wherewith to withstand the rigours of exile; but as it is, they repair to the houses of study, open the holy books, and read therein of all those good things which the Holy One has promised them, and are comforted in their exile. The other nations, however, mock and insult them, saying: "Where is your God? Where are all those good things which ye declare are promised to you and because of which all the nations of the world will be ashamed or confounded before

you?" So it is written: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hate you, that cast you out as impure for my Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified—that we may behold your joy!—they shall be ashamed" (Isa. LXVI, 5). "Ye that tremble at his word" are those who have endured much evil and many reproaches, one after another, as it is written, "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace" (Jer. XXX, 5). "Your brethren that hate you" are the sons of Esau—"those that cast you out as impure", as it says, "They cried unto them, Depart ye, it is unclean" (Lam. IV, 15), for no people in the world despises Israel so utterly, spitting in their faces with the utmost contempt, as do the sons of Edom, who say unto them: "Ye are all impure like a menstruant". "For my name's sake, let the Lord be glorified": they say, "We are children of the living God and His Name is glorified in us, we reign over the world because of him who is designated 'great'—as it says, 'Esau, her great (eldest) son' (Gen. XXVII, 15), and God is also called ' great' (Ps. CXL, 3), whereas ye are the smallest of all—'Jacob, her smallest son' (Gen. XXVII, 15); where, then, is your God? Where are all those good things which are to make you the envy of all other nations? We would greatly like to see that joy of yours of which you boast, saying, 'they will be ashamed'. (The Holy Spirit, however, echoes: 'They will be ashamed!')".' Said R. Hiya: 'It is indeed so; we see, nevertheless, as did also the great ones who were in this world in earlier years, that the exile is prolonged and that the son of David (the Messiah) has not yet appeared.' R. Jose replied: 'Yes. But what is it that enables Israel to endure their exile for so long? It is those promises which the Holy One has given them, as we have pointed out; so that when they go to the synagogues and houses of study and see all those consolations, all those comforting and sure hopes, they rejoice in their hearts and are able to endure all that comes upon them; otherwise they would not be able.' Said R. Hiya: 'True. And all depends on repentance. But shouldst thou imagine that they could at this time all together rouse themselves to repentance, I tell thee, no, they could not. Why? Because it is written:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee . . . and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God . . . then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity . . and will return and gather thee from all the nations . . . If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of the heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee . . ." (Deut. xxx, 1–5). As long as the whole implication of this passage remains unfulfilled, repentance cannot [189a] show itself among them.' Said R. Jose: 'How hast thou closed up all ways and issues of escape against the benighted children of exile, leaving no loophole nor any ground for courage or hope! For there will assuredly be many—as there have been in all generations—who will wish neither the long exile nor the future reward, and will break loose from the precepts of the Torah and be absorbed in other nations! Not so. It says: "Like as a woman with child that draws near the time of her delivery is in pain and cries out in her pangs, so have we been before thee, O Lord" (Isa. xxvi, 17). Now the normal time of pregnancy is nine months, but it frequently happens that the child is born only a few days into the ninth month; yet all the pain and pangs take place in the ninth month, no matter whether the full time of pregnancy has elapsed. So also with Israel: Once they have tasted the pangs of exile, so soon as they repent they will be looked upon as though they had indeed endured all those things which are mentioned in Scripture, all the more so as really many tribulations have befallen them since the exile began.

'It is written: "When thou art in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee in the end of days" (Deut. iv, 30). The great love which the Holy One has bestowed upon Israel may be illustrated by the following parable. A king had an only son whom he loved dearly, and because he loved him he entrusted to the queen, his mother, the whole care of his upbringing and his instruction in the right manner of life. In course of time the son committed some misdeed which offended his father. The king punished him and then forgave him. But lo! The prince again offended, and this

time the king was very wroth and expelled him from the palace in disgrace. The young man departed, but, instead of beginning a new life and adopting the path of virtue, so that his father, hearing of his plight, should long for his return, he said to himself: "Since I am out of my father's palace I can behave as I please", and he went and associated with harlots, polluting himself in their filth, and was always to be found in their company. The queen, his mother, inquired every day about him, so that she knew all about his doings from day to day, including his association with harlots, and she wept bitterly and grieved over her son. One day the king entered into her chamber and found her crying. He asked her: "Why weepest thou?" She replied: "Should I not weep when our son is away from the king's palace, consorting with harlots?" Said the king: "For thy sake I will let him come back, but thou must be responsible for him." She replied: "I will be." Said the king: "That being so, we must not fetch him publicly by day, since it would be a dishonour for us to visit brothels in search of him. Had he not so utterly disgraced himself, I would have gone to fetch him with great pomp at the head of all my army, with trumpets and songs of joy for our reconciliation, with a special bodyguard to escort him at his right and at his left, so that the whole world would be filled with awe and know that he is the king's son. But now that he has besmirched my honour, he must return secretly, that no one be aware of it." So the prince was brought back privily to the palace, and the king gave him over to his mother. After a time he misbehaved himself yet again. What then did the king do? He threw mother and son together out of the palace, saying: "Both of you must now be cast out and go, and suffer exile and punishment, for I know in my heart that, when ye shall suffer together, my son will really repent". Similarly, the Israelites are sons of the Holy King, who let them go down into captivity, in Egypt. Shouldst thou say, But at that time they had not sinned, the answer would be that what the Holy One had decreed (to Abraham) "between the pieces" (of the sacrifice, Gen. xv, 6–21) had to be fulfilled, and also Abraham's question, "Whereby shall I know that I shall

inherit it ?" (*Ibid.* v, 8), was a [189b] cause of Israel's banishment in Egypt. However, until they went out from Egypt they were not yet a nation and did not appear in a fitting light. It is written: "As the rose among thorns so is my love among the daughters" (S.S. II, 2). The Holy One desired to shape Israel on the celestial pattern, so that there should be one rose on earth, even as it is in heaven. Now, the rose which gives out a sweet aroma, and is conspicuous among all other roses, is the one which grows among thorns. This is the nature of roses. Therefore He planted "rose-trees" to the number of seventy couples—each consisting of male and female—namely, the seventy souls descending from Jacob, —and placed them all between the thorns. And these thorns, as soon as the roses were among them, brought forth branches and leaves and ruled over the world. When the Holy One came to pluck the rose from among the thorns, then the latter dried up and became worthless. When He went to gather this rose—that is to say, to bring His first-born son out from Egypt—the King came with many mighty angelic hosts with banners flying, and delivered His first-born out of bondage with many mighty deeds and brought him unto His Palace, and there he dwelt for a long time with the King. When he sinned against his Father he was reproved and punished by Him, as it is written: "And the anger of the Lord was against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers . . ." (Judges II, 14). And when he sinned again and rebelled against his Father he was driven out of the Father's house. Then what did the Israelites do ? They saw that they were driven away to Babylon, so they became reckless and mixed freely with the heathen nations, took foreign women as their wives, and begat children from them. Withal, however, the "Holy Mother" (the Shekinah) pleaded their cause and protected them. And because Israel misbehaved thus, the Holy One said: "Let my son come out from his sojourn by himself, because he has profaned himself. It would be unseemly for Me to go there and bring him out Myself, manifesting signs and wonders as before." So they returned from Babylon alone and without assistance, without signs and wonders, but in separate groups, weary and

poverty-stricken, and returned to the King's Palace in shame; and the "Holy Mother" was responsible for them. Then they sinned yet again. What did the Holy One do ? He drove the son from out of His Palace, even as He had done the previous time, and his Mother with him, and He said: "From now on let the Mother and Her son suffer many afflictions together", as it is written. "For your transgressions was your mother sent away" (Isa. L, 1). And this is the significance of the words: "When thou art in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee in the end of days". What is "the end of days" ? It designates the "Holy Mother" (Shekinah), with whom the children of Israel suffered together all the tribulations of exile. And if they only repent, even one suffering or one sorrow would be considered as equivalent to all the sufferings which were decreed as their portion; but if they do not so repent they will have to remain in exile until the "end" draws nigh to completion, yea, throughout the length of all its generations, as the Holy Lamp (R. Simeon) has told us, quoting the words: "And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it throughout his generations" (Lev. XXV, 30). Yea, verily, all depends upon repentance ?' Said R. Hiya: 'Indeed, thou art right ! And therefore the exile is prolonged, but the Holy One will accomplish all His promises to them at the "end of days", as it is written, "And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. II, 2).[1] [190a]

In regard to the intimation which God gave to Moses, that although Israel will sin against Him in every generation He does not desire anyone to rise up and accuse them, what actual examples have we ? One is the prophet Hosea, who first said, "The beginning of he word of the Lord by Hosea . . ." (Hosea I, 2), but soon after had to proclaim,

[1] Here in the original follows a passage dealing with the allusions to "Ancient Abraham" and "the Cup of Benediction" contained in the expressions "top of the mountains" and "end of days".

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea . . ." (*Ibid.* II, 1), i.e. although he began with accusations he had afterwards to proclaim blessings. Therefore the prophet blessed them with many blessings in order to move them to repentance, to turn them to their Father in Heaven, and he ceased interceding until the Holy One forgave their sins and they were purified before Him. The same is true of Elijah. For what do we read concerning him? "And he came and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die" (1 Kings XIX, 4). He said: "Lord of the world, Thou didst send a woman to Israel whose name was Deborah, and she caused them to repent, as it is written: 'until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel' (Judges V, 7); but I came and preached to them but did not succeed." As he was thus sitting beneath the tree, the Holy One revealed Himself to him and said: "What dost thou here, Elijah? At first thou didst show zeal on behalf of the Covenant, which when I observed I was glad for the sake of thy jealousy on My behalf, in regard to that Covenant, and so I took it with the consent of Moses and gave it to thee"—for it is written: "Wherefore say, Behold I give unto him (Phineas=Elijah) My Covenant: peace" (Num. XXV, 12)—"and now, as this Covenant of peace is thine, it is no longer right for thee to stand forth as an accuser of Israel: thou must let thy zeal lie fallow and leave the punishment of My people to Me, even as in the beginning, when it was mine, I left it in another hand, and did not accuse them." We have learnt that at that moment he lost the gift which Moses had given to him, for it says, "He went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God". Why did he go there? In order to demand the return of the Covenant from him who acquired it of old on the mount of God. Said Moses to him when he made this demand: "Thou canst not receive it from me, go to the little ones in Israel (those who are about to be circumcised) and thou wilt benefit from them, and they will give it to thee." And he did as Moses bade him.'[1]

'What kindness has the Holy One shown to Israel in every

[1] The text here seems to be defective.

period of its history! Observe that it says: "O my people, what have I done unto thee? . . . and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam" (Micah VI, 4). Now, there were many other prophets after Moses, [190b] and so surely it ought to run: "And I sent . . . Moses, Aaron, Eleazar, Phineas, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, and ever so many other righteous men and saints." Why are only these three mentioned? Because what the Holy One meant was this: "My people, why do you not remember all the kindness that I have shown you in sending to you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam?" God was like a king who had a province and sent to it august governors to rule it, to lead the people, and to care for their welfare. Upon whom should fall the obligation of providing these high representatives of the king with their requirements, if not upon the inhabitants of that province? But with God it was the opposite. "I have sent unto you", says the Holy One, "Moses, who gave you manna to eat and led you and your children and your cattle, and exerted himself on your behalf, that all your wants might be satisfied. I have sent to you Aaron likewise, who brought to you clouds of glory wherewith to cover you as with a king's garment, who bathed you with the precious dew so that your garments and your sandals did not wear out, but were renewed every day. Also I have sent unto you Miriam, who brought a miraculous cistern to supply you with water, from which you and your cattle drank and were refreshed. These three provided you all things needful for your existence and ye ate and drank and sat under their canopy of glory, but ye gave not anything to them—on the contrary, when they laboured on your behalf and took your burdens on their shoulders, ye rewarded them with insult and scorn." ' Said R. Jose: 'There never was a father as merciful and loving to his children as the Holy One to Israel. That lovingkindness is expressed in the words: "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people . . . there hath not failed one word of all his good words which he promised" (1 Kings VIII, 56). Observe His great mercy and love, how it is specially manifested in this passage. For had it merely said, "There hath not failed one word of all his words", it would have been better for the world and all

the people thereof never to have been created; but as it says, "of all His *good* words", evil and punishment were not included, for the Lord prefers if possible to leave His intention of punishment unfulfilled. And even when He threatens and raises the lash (to punish), the "Mother" (the Shekinah) comes and takes hold of His Right Arm so that the lash remains suspended, but does not descend, because both are of one counsel, He in threatening, and she in holding his hand. If you ask, Whence do we know all this ? we answer, from the following clear statement. "And the Lord said to Moses: Go, get thee down, for thy people have corrupted themselves" (Ex. XXXII, 7). The Lord began to lift the lash, and Moses, not knowing the ways of the "Mother", was silent in fear. As soon as the Holy One perceived this, He pricked him and incited him by saying, "Now, therefore, let Me, that My wrath may wax hot against them." Moses divined immediately what this foreboded, and realized what he must do: so he seized the Holy One's arm, for it is written that he said, "Remember Abraham", etc. (*Ibid.*, v. 13), on account of which the lash did not descend. But where was the "Mother", whose proper function it was to stay the Arm and prevent punishment ? Why did She leave the task to Moses ? I ask this question and am utterly baffled, knowing not what answer to give, until we repair to the Holy Lamp (R. Simeon).' When they came into his presence R. Simeon at once saw from their faces that something was troubling them. He said to them: 'Enter, my holy children ! Come, O ye beloved sons of the King ! Come, my cherished and dearly loved ones, ye who love one another !'—for R. Abba once said that Companions who love not one another pass away from the world before their time. All the Companions in the time of R. Simeon loved one another with heart and soul, and therefore in his generation the secrets were revealed; for he was wont to say that students of the Holy Torah who do not love one another cause a departure from the right path, and what is even more serious, cause a blemish in the very Torah itself, for the Torah is the essence of love, brotherhood, and truth. Abraham loved Isaac, and Isaac loved Abraham. They embraced one another; and Jacob was held by both in

love and fellowship, intermingling their spirits each with each. Therefore members of the fellowship follow that example in order not to cause any blemish in the Torah.

As we have said, R. Simeon, having observed a certain sign in the faces of the newcomers, welcomed them with words of love; and they answered him saying, 'Of a truth the spirit of prophecy rests upon the Holy Lamp, and so we should have known.' R. Simeon, having heard them, wept and said; 'This is one of those sayings whose significance was revealed to me in a whisper from the school of knowledge in Paradise itself, and which should not be repeated openly. Yet, in spite of all this, I will now reveal it unto you, O my beloved children, my children whom my soul loves ! What else can I do ? It was told to me in a whisper, but I will tell it to you openly, and when the days of the Messiah shall be come, when we shall see face to face, [191*a*] all the "faces" will give their consent. Now, the sin which the "outsiders"—"the mixed multitude"—committed, and in which the holy people participated, was a sin against the "Holy Mother", the Shekinah, because they said, "Up, make us a god" (*Elohim*) (Ex. XXXII, 1)—*Elohim*, the Glory of Israel, She who rested upon them like a mother on her children. This is the secret contained in the words: "They changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" (Ps. CVI, 20). Yea, verily, that is the Glory of Israel: their Mother. Therefore it also says, "The glory has departed" (1 Sam. IV, 22), because they caused the Shekinah to go into exile with them. They changed their glory with what ? "The similitude of an ox." Herein lies a mystery. From out of the midst of the dregs of the wine, the dregs of evil, an Accuser emerges, the first Damager, in the form of a man approaching the Sanctuary. As soon as he passes on from there and desires to descend and wreak his evil will upon the earth he has to cover himself with a garment. Then he comes down with his hosts. And the first garment in which he clothes himself is the form of an ox. Therefore the first of those accusing demons is an ox. He is one of the "four principal damagers"[1] who come down to inflict misery on the world. All the three

[1] Cf. T. B. Baba Kama, *ad init.*

other damagers belong to and are under this first ox. What is the significance of "that eateth grass"? We have already explained it, but the essence of it is that those evil principalities have no portion in the residue of bread or of the seven kinds of wheat. Therefore the "Mother" was not there, and it would have been unfitting for Her to be there. But, knowing Her love and Her compassionate ways, the Father said to Moses: "My beloved son, both (of us) do ever concur in this counsel." This has been whispered to me secretly, and, as I have told you, it is not meant to be noised abroad lest the children should see that the lash is ready to descend, and so be ever in fear and trembling. However, God and the Shekinah are in one counsel, and rule according to the selfsame plan.'

'AND WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THAT MOSES DELAYED (*boshesh*) TO COME DOWN OUT OF THE MOUNT. The word "people" denotes the "mixed multitude". And who were the "mixed multitude"? Were they Lydians, Ethiopians, or Cyprians? Were they not all Egyptians, and did they not all come from Egypt? If they had consisted of a mixture of many different nations, would not the plural verb *'alu* (went up) have been used instead of the singular *'ala* (Ex. XII, 38)? In fact, however, the "mixed multitude" consisted entirely of one people all the members of which spoke one language: namely, all the sorcerers of Egypt and all its magicians, as it is written, "And the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments" (Ex. VII, 11); for they wanted to oppose the wonderful works of the Holy One, blessed be He. When they beheld the signs and the wonders which Moses wrought in Egypt they came to Moses to be converted. Said the Holy One to Moses: "Do not receive them!" Moses, however, replied: "Sovereign of the universe, now that they have seen Thy power they desire to accept our Faith, let them see Thy power every day and they will learn that there is no God like unto Thee." And Moses accepted them. And why, then, were they called "mixed multitude"? Because they consisted of all the grades of the Egyptian magicians, at their head being Jannes and

Jambres.[1] During the hours of the day these wizards practised their unholy arts, and from the time of the setting of the sun, the beginning of the second half of the sixth hour to the commencement of the second half of the ninth hour, they made observations of the heavens: the middle of the ninth hour being the "great evening" (*ereb rab*, which means both "great multitude" and "great evening"). The lesser magicians, however, did not thus: they made observation from the middle of the ninth hour until midnight. The chief wizards began at the time mentioned above because the nine hundred and ninety-five grades begin then to roam upon the mountains of darkness, and their spirit moved upon all those magicians in virtue of their witchcraft, and they did all that the latter asked of them, so that all the Egyptians had complete faith in them and called them "large evening", in contrast to the "small evening", which began from the middle of the tenth hour. [191b] And because there were two "evenings", it speaks of the "large evening": that is, the chief magicians, who went out with the children of Israel from Egypt. Their wisdom was great. They studied the hours of the day and their significance, and they studied the grade of Moses and perceived that he was in all quarters in the number six (*be-shesh*[2]), namely in the first six hours of the day, over which they had no power and could exercise no control, and also in the six supernal grades to which Moses was attached; and they realized that he was to come down from the Mount in the crowns of these six grades; but when the appointed time was come Moses had not yet returned. At once THE PEOPLE GATHERED THEMSELVES TOGETHER UNTO AARON. Why did the magicians gather themselves unto Aaron? In order that they might be included in the Right Side, while yet evoking the Left; so to Aaron they came, as he represented the Side of Mercy.

'AND SAID UNTO HIM: UP, MAKE US ELOHIM. Observe, that the whole time that Moses was in Egypt he did not once mention the name Elohim, but only *YHVH*, and

[1] Cf. Targum Jonathan, Ex. VII, 11. [2] Same letters as *boshesh* = delayed.

therefore it was hard for Pharaoh, because through this the "other side" had no power and could not dominate the world. Now, however, the magicians sought after that divine Name, and therefore they said, "Make *us* Elohim", because we need the knowledge of just this aspect of the Divine Personality in order to strengthen our own side, which has hitherto been pushed away. WHICH SHALL GO BEFORE US. What did they mean by that? We see that all the good things and all the glory of the world belong to you—Israel—while we are pushed outside. We also want Elohim, who should walk before us as YHVH walketh before you, for our "side" has also the right and the power to walk before us, if we make proper preparation before it. Observe that all the clouds of glory which moved with the people in the wilderness covered only the children of Israel, and the cloud of Glory went before them, as it is written: "And the Lord walked before them by day". But this "mixed multitude", and all the cattle, walked on behind, outside the camp. Observe also this, that all the forty years that the Israelites walked in the wilderness no unclean object was permitted within that cloud-canopy. Therefore all the cattle, the grass eaters, remained outside together with those who tended them.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Father, in that case, that "mixed multitude" did not partake of the manna?' R. Simeon replied: 'Certainly not, indeed! They only had what the Israelites chose to give them, as one gives to a slave. And what part of the food did they eat? Of the husks which remained clinging to the millstones. Scripture proclaims it directly: "And the *children of Israel* ate the manna forty years long" (Ex. XVI, 35). Thus, until this time, the "mixed multitude" was kept down, but now they sought the performance of some act whereby they might strengthen the "other side", and they said, "either we become all of us one people so that we are included in you, or let us have one to walk before us, even as your God walks before you." Said Aaron: "It is not to be thought of that these should join with the holy people to become one with them, or that the holy should become mingled with them. It would be better to separate them entirely from the holy people until Moses comes back." Aaron verily meant to do all things for the best, only, alas! there were many in Israel who did associate themselves with the others, if not in action at least in their hearts. Therefore, when Moses finally arrived, he had to purify the holy people from that sin, and he gave them that water (Ex. XXXIII, 20) to drink until they were all purified [192a] and no dregs of unholiness were left in them.

'AND AARON SAID TO THEM, BREAK OFF THE GOLDEN EARRINGS (Ex. XXXII, 2). Did they have no other gold? Aaron's idea, however, was that while they were arguing with their wives and children time would be gained and Moses might return before harm was done. Observe how true the saying is: "Proselytes cause as much pain to Israel as a sore does to the flesh", particularly in this case, when they were not even genuine proselytes.

'AND ALL THE PEOPLE BRAKE OFF THE GOLDEN EARRINGS WHICH WERE IN THEIR EARS, AND BROUGHT THEM UNTO AARON. What quantities of such earrings there must have been there! AND HE RECEIVED THEM AT THEIR HAND AND FASHIONED IT WITH A GRAVING-TOOL. Here it is plainly to be seen that Aaron did not guard himself against the two magicians who were the head of that "mixed multitude". One of these stood in front of him, and the other busied himself with his witchcraft. After the two sorcerers had hatched their plan they took the gold, one two-thirds and the other one-third, this being the method of that kind of magic.' At this point R. Simeon wept, and said 'O pious one! O holy one! O Aaron, thou anointed of the great God! Through thy piety many of the holy people have fallen, and this all because thou knewest not how to guard thyself! Alas! What did those sorcerers do? When the first six hours had passed and the scales of the day were even, they took that gold which they brake off their ears. Why did they *break* it off? Because he who desires to perform witchcraft must not consider the value of his possessions; and they thought, "the hour is now propitious for us, provided we do not waste time; therefore it is no time to worry

about gold". At once, "All the people brake off the golden earrings", that is, they "brake" or tore their ears in their eagerness to take off the rings.' R. Simeon then wept again and said: 'O holy people, O holy people of God . . . Alas, alas!' Then he continued in tears: 'It is written: "And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master . . . I will not go out free . . . then his master shall bore his ear . . ." (Ex. XXI, 5–6), and the Companions have commented: "the ear which heard on Mount Sinai the words, 'For the children of Israel are servants unto Me'—and not servants of servants—and which yet stoops to hearken to the words of tempters, causing its owner to shake off the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and sell himself to another man—such an ear must be bored."[1] And these sinners and evildoers, in their eagerness to return to their sinful ways, did not ask their wives and children, but broke their ears and threw off the yoke of heaven, forfeiting their right to any part in the Holy Name or the heritage of the holy people. What did they do, those two magicians? They divided that gold, as we have said: one took two-thirds and the other took one-third. They stood opposite the sun at the sixth hour. They manipulated the instruments of their sorcery and uttered their incantations. And when the seventh hour came they both lifted up their hands and placed them upon Aaron's hands, for it is written: "And he received them at their hand". There were thus only two from whom he "received them". As soon as he took the gold from their hand a voice proclaimed: "When the hand joins hand evil shall not be unpunished" (Prov. XI, 21), as Aaron said: "Thou knowest the people that they are set on evil" (Ex. XXXII, 22); that is, they brought evil into the world. The secret of it was that these wicked sorcerers, sons of wicked Balaam, grandsons of wicked Laban, perceived that the Cup of Benediction must be in the right hand, and that energy and power always emanate from the Right Side; so they thought in their hearts, "If the representative of the Right, namely the High Priest, should be on our side, then the power will properly and completely be ours." As soon as the seventh hour of the day was arrived they gave the

[1] v. Mechilta, *ad loc.*

gold instantly to Aaron. Now, had he but said to them, "Put the gold first on the ground and I will pick it up", their witchcraft would have had no effect whatever; but alas! he took it from their hand, wherefore Scripture complains: "And he received them at their hand!" See now the unhappy fate of Aaron! A prophet he, a sage, a holy man of God, and yet he could not guard himself! For had he only taken the gold from the ground all the magicians of the world could not have succeeded in their designs.

AND FASHIONED IT WITH A GRAVING-TOOL. This does not mean, as people are apt to think, that he carved designs upon it with a graving-tool or chisel. What the text comes to show us is that Aaron was not sufficiently on his guard. For had he, even after taking it from their hands, thrown in on the ground, even if he had picked it up afterwards, this evil operation would not have [192b] succeeded; but what he did was to put the whole of the gold into a bag, so keeping it hidden from view. This made the witchcraft effective. We have found in the Book of Enoch the following: "An only son[1] will be born unto Him of the White Head,[2] and when they of the asses' flesh[3] shall come, they will mislead him through him who puts pearls into bells of gold without knowing what he does, and an image will be fashioned with a chisel." What does *heret* ("chisel"—or more literally "style") here signify? It alludes to the "style of a man *(enosh)*" (Isa. VIII, 1), namely, to the style of the wicked Enosh, the grandchild of Adam (Gen. V, 6), who corrupted the world by chiselling images and idols with that "style". Now, this is what occurred in the case of Aaron: first he threw the gold into a bag and hid it from view—which, as we have said, is an essential adjunct to all magical processes, for in their lore it is taught that anything which is to be made a public show of must first be covered up and hidden away; and conversely, what has to be hidden afterwards must first be shown to view. Now, my beloved children, the darlings of my soul! what shall I do? I must perforce disclose to you; but, I pray you, reveal it not again. In the side of holiness

[1] Aaron. [2] The Supernal Priest. [3] The mixed multitude, cf. Ezek, XXIII, 20.

the true God (*Elohim*) reigns over the universe. He takes hold of three worlds—of *Beriah* (Creation), *Yeẓirah* (Formation), and *'Asiyah* (Completion)[1]; and we have in the verse under consideration an allusion to each one of those phases. "He received them at their hand" corresponds to *beriah*, since it symbolizes something as yet unfashioned; "and he fashioned it with a graving-tool" corresponds to *yeẓirah*; and then "he made it a golden calf". Ah, who has ever beheld such wily magicians, such crafty sorcerers as these! Now one may well ask, Is it not written that Aaron said: "*I* cast it unto the fire and then came out this calf"? Yet it is quite impossible to imagine that Aaron himself made that thing; in fact, it expressly states: "And he (Moses) took the calf which *they* made". Obviously, then, it was made by the unwitting power of those two actions of his: first, his having taken the gold from their hands, and secondly, his binding it up in a bag. It is only in a subsidiary sense that he can be said to have made it: were it not for those two actions, it would not have materialised. But when he took the gold from their hands they began their magical manipulations and incantations and so drew down the spirit of impurity from the "other side", and caused two spirits to come together, one male and the other female. The male was disguised in the form of an ox and the female in that of an ass, and these two became one. Why just these? As to the ox, an explanation has already been given, but what of the ass? The reason for the inclusion of this beast in the symbolism of that unholy union is that concerning these Egyptian magicians we read: "the flesh of asses is their flesh" (Ezek. XXIII, 20); and through this we know that all those of the people of Israel who died because of that sin of the golden calf had sympathized with them in their hearts. And because there were two images, it says concerning the calf, "these are thy *gods*, O Israel".

'AND HE MADE IT A MOLTEN CALF. We are told that it weighed one hundred and twenty-five hundredweight (this figure being the numerical equivalent of the word *massekah*, "molten"); how, then, could he have taken them all from

[1] c. Introduction, vol. I, p. xvii.

"their hands"? Could such a heavy weight possibly be lifted and held by human hands? The fact is, however, that they held in their hands only so much as filled them, and this portion represented the whole. It is written: "And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it". O holy man! strange that with all thy good intentions thou knewest not how to guard thyself! As soon as the gold was thrown into the fire the power of the "other side" was strengthened there, and the image of an ox emerged, [193a] as already mentioned, through the two attractive forces of the "other side". At once "Aaron saw". What did he see? He saw that the "other side" had gained power, and immediately afterwards he built an altar; for had he not hastened so to do, the world would have been turned again into a waste. He was like a king's officer who sees that the highway is infested by a very formidable robber. He therefore persuaded the king to go forth on that road and then enticed the robber there. When the robber beheld the figure of the king before him he was seized with fear, and retreated. Similarly, Aaron, when he realized that the "other side" was gaining strength, grasped the one remedy left him and strengthened the side of holiness by making an altar. As soon as the "other side" saw the image of the king before it, it retreated and its power was weakened. Observe what Aaron proclaimed: "It is a feast (*hag*) to the Lord" (*Ibid.*). "A feast to the Lord", not to the calf. He laboured for the side of holiness, and summoned the people to the side of holiness. And this was the remedy which he hastened to apply, and failing which the world would have collapsed. And yet for all that "the anger of the Lord was roused against Aaron", although he himself had intended no evil. The Holy One said to him: "Aaron, those two magicians have drawn thee to do whatsoever they would. By thy life! Two of thy sons shall be struck down and die because of this sin." This is the implication of the words: "And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him" (Deut. IX, 20). Observe this: Aaron erected an altar before the Lord, and all that the calf symbolized retreated before it. Aaron's sons (Nadab and Abihu) erected the ensign of the "other side" before the face of the Lord ("strange

fire") and the "Side of Holiness" retreated, as it is written, "And they offered strange fire before the Lord" (Lev. x, 1). They brought it unto His altar and were punished for this sin.

'Aaron thought that in the meantime Moses would come back, and therefore Moses did not destroy the altar. For had it indeed been the case— as some think— that the altar was built in honour of the image, then surely Moses' first action should have been to destroy it, as the prophet Iddo, for instance, prophesied that the altar of Bethel would be destroyed (1 Kings XIII). But here it was quite different, as I have made clear. Moses "took the calf which they made and burnt it in the fire and ground it to powder", but it does not say that he destroyed the altar. Observe that it says, "And Aaron proclaimed and said, To-morrow is a feast of the Lord." The expression, "proclaimed and said" is used concerning Jonah (when he preached to the Ninevites, Jonah III, 4): and as there it denoted judgement, so does it also here.

"TO-MORROW IS A FEAST OF THE LORD. He prophesied in the spirit of that altar in order that judgement might come upon the iniquitous: "a feast of the Lord to exercise judgement upon you". The people suffered a threefold punishment: one wrought by the Lord (v. 35), one at the hands of the sons of Levi (v. 28), and one inflicted by Moses, when he made the children of Israel drink the water (v. 20). The night after they had drunk it they slept, but on the next day their bodies were all swollen and they died from the effects of that water. Mark also that the altar which Aaron made was intended for holiness, and dedicated unto the Lord, since it says that Moses "saw the calf and the dancing" (v. 19), but it does not mention the altar, for Aaron knew very well that "he who sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed" (Ex. XXII, 20) and he was certainly saved by the good plan which he conceived, and all was done by him with a perfect and righteous intention.'

Said R. Eleazar: 'Father, it is indeed and truly so; and they who committed this sin were not genuine Israelites, but when Jeroboam put up the golden calves, were they not

Israelites who worshipped them ?' R. Simeon replied: 'Truly so. But it has been explained thus. Jeroboam sinned and caused others to do likewise, for he sinned against the Kingdom. He reasoned thus: "I know well enough that the 'side of holiness' dwells only in the heart and centre of the world, namely in Jerusalem, and therefore I cannot draw down that side on to this region (*Shechem*). What, then, shall I do?" "Whereupon he took counsel and made two calves of gold" (1 Kings VI, 28). He conceived a wicked design, thinking: [193b] "The 'other side' can be drawn to every place, especially in this land (the Holy Land), where it is eager to dwell." But the "other side" could only be represented in the guise of an ox. Why, then, did he put up two calves ? Because he thought, "In the wilderness dwelt those sorcerers of whom it says that 'their flesh is the flesh of asses'. Here are those two same evil spirits; let them be clothed in the manner appropriate to them, as male and female—male in Bethel and female in Dan". And so, indeed, it was. And since, as we are told, "The lips of the strange woman (idolatry) drop as an honeycomb", the Israelites were drawn with a special bewitchment towards the female of the kind, as it is written, "And the people went to (worship) before the one, unto Dan" (1 Kings XII, 29). Therefore there were two calves, and Jeroboam attracted them unto the Holy Land, and this thing became a sin to him and to Israel, and he prevented blessings from coming down onto the world; and concerning him it is written, 'Whoso robbeth his father and his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer" (Prov. XXVIII, 24). Therefore, also, they were calves, because the first disguise or garment donned by the powers of the "other side" is an ox, as we have pointed out. And if it be asked why they were calves and not oxen, the answer is that it is ever thus with the demons of unholiness: they first appear in a diminutive form. Therefore, my beloved children, since they (the "mixed multitude") desired the aspect of Elohim, and the act (of the golden calf) was carried out with an intention in which the "side" of Elohim was kept in mind, that Holy Elohim, the "Mother" (the Shekinah), who doth ever keep back the Right Hand of the King

(when He is about to punish His people) and holds up the lash, was not present there; so it was necessary for Moses to take Her place; and as soon as the Holy One awakened a certain uneasiness in him, he comprehended what it meant. Three times did the Holy One rouse this feeling in him, as it is written, "Now therefore let Me"; "that My wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them"; "and I will make of thee a great nation". Moses showed his wisdom in responding to these three intimations. He took hold of the Right Arm, which action corresponded to the first warning; he took hold of the Left Arm, and this corresponded to the second; he embraced the Body of the King, which corresponded to the last. And when he had embraced the "Body", and the two Arms, the one from this and the other from that side, He could not move to any side. This was Moses' wisdom: that he perceived, by means of the Lord's signs, which place to take hold of; and he did all things in wisdom.'

R. Eleazar and the Companions then approached him and kissed his hands. R. Abba was also present. Said he: 'Had I come into this world only to hear these words, it would have been worth while.' Then he wept, and said: 'Woe unto us, Master, when thou shalt depart from the world! Who will then light up for us the greater radiances of the Torah? This subject was hidden in darkness until now, but at last it has emerged and shines even unto the highest heavens. It is engraved upon the Throne of the King, the Holy One Himself rejoices in this discourse. Joy upon joy has been added before the face of the Holy King. Who will awaken words of wisdom in this world as thou dost?'[1]

[1] From here to the end of *Ki Tisa* is a verbal repetition of Zohar, Gen., 52*a*–53*a* ("Until he sinned . . . caused that imperfection").

VAYAQHEL

Ex. XXXV, 1–XXXVIII, 20

AND MOSES ASSEMBLED ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, ETC. R. Ḥiya opened here a discourse on the text: "And Saul said unto the Kenites: Go depart", etc. (1 Sam. XV, 6). 'Observe', he said, 'that in regard to Amalek it is written: "I remember that which Amalek did to Israel", etc. (*Ibid.* XV, 2). What is the reason that none of the wars waged by other nations against Israel was so displeasing to the Almighty as was the war waged against them by Amalek? The reason, assuredly, is that the battle with Amalek was waged on both fronts, both on high and below; for at that time the evil serpent gathered all its forces both above and below. It is the way of a serpent to lie in wait on the cross-roads. So Amalek, the evil serpent of Israel, was lying in wait for them [195*a*] on the cross-roads, as it is written: "how he set himself against him in the way" (*Ibid.*). He was lying in ambush on high in order to defile the Sanctuary, and below in order to defile Israel. This we deduce from the expression, "how he met thee by the way" (Deut. XXV, 18), where the term *qar'kha* is meant to suggest the kindred term in the passage, "If there be among you any man that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him (*miqre*) by night" (*Ibid.* XXIII, 11). By using the term *qar'kha*, the text as much as says: "He has arrayed against thee that evil serpent from above that he may defile thee on all sides"; and were it not that Moses from above, and Joshua from below, put forth all their strength, Israel would not have prevailed against him. It is for this reason that the Holy One, blessed be He, cherished His enmity against him throughout all generations, inasmuch as he planned to uproot the sign of the covenant from its place.[1]

'Our verse continues: "And Saul said to the Kenite." The Kenite, as we know, was Jethro. Now, how came the

[1] i.e. to lead Israel into ways of unchastity.

descendants of Jethro to have their abode alongside of Amalek? Was not Jericho their home? But the explanation is found in the verse: "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees (i.e. Jericho) with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah" (Judges I, 16); that is to say, when they left Jericho, they moved on as far as the border of Amalek, where they settled and remained until the time of King Saul, when, as we read, "the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites" (1 Sam. XV, 6). They had to depart because, when the time comes to punish the guilty, the pious and just who are among them are first made responsible for their sins. This has already been made clear elsewhere. Similarly, if it had not been for the riff-raff that became associated with Israel, the Israelites would not have incurred punishment for the sin of the golden calf. For, observe that first it is written here, "of *every man* whose heart makes him willing ye shall take my offering" (Ex. XXV, 2); to wit, of the whole body of the people, including the mixed multitude, as the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to have in the work of the Tabernacle the co-operation of all sections of the people, both the "brain" category and the "shell" category: all were charged with the performance of the work. Subsequently, however, the sections separated, each betaking itself to its own affinity, and so the mixed multitude made the golden calf and led astray numbers who afterwards died, and thus brought upon Israel death and slaughter. The Holy One, blessed be He, then said: "Henceforward the work of the Tabernacle shall be performed from the side of Israel only." Straightway "Moses assembled all the congregation of the *children of Israel* . . . *Take ye from among you* an offering unto the Lord" (*Ibid.* XXXV, 1–5). "From among you" emphatically, but not "from every man whose heart maketh him willing", as in the previous injunction. Furthermore, as no place of assembly is mentioned, the words, "And Moses assembled", etc., signify that, as the mixed multitude were mingled among the Israelites, Moses found it necessary to assemble the latter on one side so as to segregate them from the former.'

AND MOSES ASSEMBLED. R. Abba cited in connection with this the verse: "Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones" (Deut. XXXI, 12). 'Just as there', he said, 'the gathering comprised the whole of Israel, so here also Moses assembled the whole of Israel; to wit, the six hundred thousand men.' R. Eleazar expounded our text in relation to Israel at the time when Moses descended from Mount Sinai, regarding which it is written: "And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses: There is a noise of war in the camp" (Ex. XXXII, 17). Is it possible that Joshua heard it and Moses did not hear it? The truth is that Moses knew already what had befallen, whilst Joshua only now became aware of it; and the word *bere'oh* (when they shouted) can read *bera'ah*, i.e. "in evil", as that tumult proceeded from the "other side" (synonymous with evil). For Joshua, who (as compared with Moses) was emblematic of the moon, apprehended the sound that proceeded from the evil side, and straightway "he said unto Moses: There is a noise of war in the camp". At that moment the two first tables of stone became too heavy for Moses' hands, as already stated elsewhere, [195b] and dropped from them and broke. The reason was that the letters of the tables of stone flew away.

'Mark this. At the turn of the four seasons of the year a sound arises in the four quarters of the world through which the sinister side is stirred up, interposing between one sound and another, and at the same time obscuring the light that streams from on high. It is because the voice from above does not meet that from below that the left side is aroused and is able to insinuate itself between the two. That interposing sound is the sound or noise of war, the noise of the evil forces; and this is the meaning of the word *bera'ah* (in evil).[1] It was for that reason that only Joshua heard that noise but not Moses, for it proceeded from that evil power that impaired the light of the moon. Hence Joshua, who was the replica of the moon, perceived that noise, whereas Moses, who was the replica of the sun, did not perceive it. The light of all Israel was altogether darkened by reason of the evil

[1] *v. supra.*

power that took hold of them. But straightway the Holy One, blessed be He, forgave them their sins.'

AND MOSES ASSEMBLED ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND SAID UNTO THEM: THESE ARE THE WORDS, ETC. He took this step because the mixed multitude were now removed from them. R. Eleazar and R. Jose were sitting one night studying the Torah. When midnight arrived, the cock crew and so they pronounced the benediction.[1] R. Eleazar wept, and said: 'Observe this. The Holy One, blessed be He, has just smitten three hundred and ninety firmaments, and made them to shake and to tremble; He has wept on account of the destruction of the Temple, dropping two tears into the great ocean, as He bethought Himself of His children with weeping. For the night is divided into three courses which extend over a definite space of twelve hours, any additional hours being counted as belonging to the day and not to the night, which has just its own twelve hours. These three night-courses are divided between three companies of angels. To the first company is assigned the period of the first four hours for the singing of the night hymn in praise of their Master. That hymn consists of the psalm, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof . . . For he hath founded it upon the seas . . . who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? . . . He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart . . ." (Ps. XXIV, 1–6). Why that hymn? Because when the night spreads its wings over the world all human beings have a foretaste of death, so that their souls quit the bodies and soar upwards to heaven. Hence those angels are stationed there, and proclaim: "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?"; to wit, the Temple Mount; "and who shall stand in His holy place?", to wit, the court of the Israelites.[2] For the Temple below has been constructed after the pattern of the Temple on high. Now, in each heaven there are various chieftains and commanders; and when the souls

[1] Blessed art Thou, O our God, King of the universe, who gavest the cock understanding to discern between day and night.

[2] i.e. the Temple area, where non-priests of the male sex could enter.

leave the body and attempt to enter heaven those that are unworthy are thrust aside by those angels, so that they roam to and fro in the world, being carried about by disembodied spirits who communicate to them lying statements, often mingled with a grain of truth, regarding events of the near future, as already explained elsewhere. But the righteous mount into heaven, where doors are opened for them through which they may enter the place called " the mount of the Lord", which is after the pattern of the Temple Mount below. From thence they penetrate within the place called "His holy place", where all the souls appear before their Master. After the same pattern, the place where Israel had to appear before the Holy One, blessed be He,[1] was called the Court of the Israelites. At the moment when the souls stand in that place there is joy before their Master, because by them the place called Holy of Holies becomes re-established: it is the place where are recorded all their deeds and their merits.

The second camp have assigned to them the second four hours of the night, but their chanting only continues until midnight, when the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden. That company consists of the mourners for Zion, the same that wept for the destruction of the Temple. The litany of the middle four hours begins with: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept", etc. (Ps. CXXXVII, 1–9), the angels that chant it having themselves actually wept at the time by the rivers of Babylon together with Israel, [196a] as is clear from the words, "yea, we wept". We learn this also from the statement of the Scripture: "Behold, the angels cry without" (Isa. XXXIII, 7), the word "without" indicating Babylon; for that company of angels accompanied the Shekinah as far as Babylon, and there they wept together with Israel. Hence they commence their chanting with "By the rivers of Babylon" and conclude with "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom", etc. (Ps. CXXXVII, 7–9). The Holy One, blessed be He, then bestirs Himself and strikes the heavens, as already said, so that twelve thousand worlds quake, and He melts in tears,

[1] v. Ex. XXXIV, 23.

as it were. So Scripture says: "The Lord doth roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he doth mightily roar because of his fold" (Jer. XXV, 30). He remembers then Israel and drops two tears into the great ocean. At that moment a flame bursts forth in the North, and, impelled by a northerly wind, roams to and fro about the world. It is the moment of midnight, and the flame strikes against the wings of the cock. The cock then crows, and the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden, for He finds no comfort until He goes there to have joyous communion with the souls of the righteous. This is the allegorical meaning of the verses: "for we are sold, I and my people. . . . Then spoke the King . . . Who is he . . . ? And the King arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden", etc. (Esther VII, 4–7). At the moment when the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden, all the trees of the garden, and all the souls of the righteous, break forth and chant: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . Who is the King of glory ? . . . Lift up your heads, O ye gates. . ." (Ps. XXIV, 7–10). And when the souls of the righteous return to their bodies, all those angels lay hold of them and chant: "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord" (*Ibid.* CXXXIV, 1). We have learned that this hymn is chanted by the third company of angels, who are occupied in song and praise during the last four hours of the night until daybreak, when all the stars and constellations, and all the superior angels who rule over the day, break forth in song and praise to their Master, this being alluded to in the words of the Scripture: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7). Then when the sun appears in full daylight, Israel takes up the song below in unison with the sun above, as Scripture says: "They reverence thee at the appearance of the sun" (Ps. LXXII, 5). For the sun, on commencing his course, breaks forth into sweet melody, chanting: "O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name . . . Sing unto him, sing praises unto him . . ." (*Ibid.* CV, 1–45).' Said R. Eleazar: 'Were mankind not so obtuse and insensitive, they would be thrilled to ecstasy by the exquisite melodiousness of the orb

of the sun when he journeys forth singing praises to the Holy One, blessed be He.'

Whilst they were thus occupied in the study of the Torah the day broke. They then arose and came into the presence of R. Simeon. As soon as he saw them he said: 'Eleazar, my son ! You, together with the Companions, must hide yourselves during the next three days, and not go out of doors, as the Angel of Death is now in the town with permission to do harm; and once such permission is given him he can lay hands on anyone that he sees. For if he catches sight of any man he ascends on high, brings an indictment against him, makes a record of his sins, and demands judgement from the Holy One, blessed be He, and he does not budge from thence until he obtains sentence against that man, after which, having received due permission, he proceeds to take his life.'

R. Simeon further said: 'I swear to you that the majority of people do not die before their time, but only those who know not how to take heed to themselves. For at the time when a dead body is taken from the house to the place of burial the Angel of Death haunts the abodes of the women. Why of the women ? Because that has been his habit since the time that he seduced Eve, through whom he brought death upon the world. Hence, when he takes a man's life, and the males are accompanying the dead body, he mingles himself on the way among the women, and he has then the power to take the life of the sons of men. He looks on the way at the faces of those who come within his sight, from the time they carry the dead body out from his house to the place of burial until they return to their homes. It is on their account that he brings about the untimely death of many people. Regarding this it is written: "But there is that is swept away without justice" (Prov. XIII, 23). For he, the Angel of Death, ascends and brings accusations and recounts man's sins before the Holy One, blessed be He, so that the man is brought to judgement for those sins, and is removed from the world before his time. What is the remedy against this ? When the dead body is carried to the place of burial, a man should turn [196b] his face in another direction, and

leave the women behind him. Should the latter pass in front he should turn round so as not to face them. Similarly, when they return from the place of burial he should not return by the way where the women are standing, and he should not look at them at all, but should turn a different way. It is because the sons of men do not know of this, and do not observe this, that the majority of people are brought up for judgement and are taken away before their time.'

Said R. Eleazar: 'If that is so, it were better for a man not at all to follow the dead to their resting place.' Said his father to him: 'Not so. For whoever takes heed unto himself in the manner just described is worthy of length of days, and still more of the world to come. Observe that it was not without cause that the ancients ordained the blowing of the trumpet at the time when the dead body is taken from the house to the place of burial. This was not instituted merely for the honour of the dead. Rather is its purpose to protect the living against the Angel of Death, so that he should not be able to indict them on high, and as a warning to us to guard themselves against him.' R. Simeon then discoursed on the verse: "And when ye go to war in your land against the adversary that oppresseth you, then ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets", etc. (Num. x, 9). 'It has been explained', he said, 'that "the adversary" refers to the Angel of Death "that oppresseth" continually and takes the lives of the sons of men, and is eager to slay others. What is the remedy against him? "Then ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets." For if on New Year's Day, the Day of Judgement in the Heavenly Court, when the Angel of Death descends here below so as to pry into men's deeds and ascends again in order to indict them—if at that time Israel, being aware that the Angel of Death is descending to earth and again ascending with the object of accusing them, anticipate him by blowing the trumpet so as to confuse him and so protect themselves against him, how much more so is this needful when the Angel of Death here below is executing judgement and taking the lives of men; and how much more still when people proceed to and return from the place of burial! For when the women walk in the funeral procession,

the Angel of Death descends and places himself among them. So Scripture says: "Her feet go down to death" (Prov. v, 5), to wit, to the region called by the name of "death". It is thus that Eve brought death into the world. May the Merciful One save us! Observe the verse, saying: "So is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness" (*Ibid.* xxx, 20). That verse has already been explained, but we may also interpret as follows: "The way of an adulterous woman" alludes to the Angel of Death, who is, indeed, called both by one name and the other; "she eateth and wipeth her mouth", to wit, he consumes the world by the conflagration which he kindles, taking men's lives before their time, "and saith, I have done no wickedness", since he invoked judgement against them, and they were found guilty, and thus died in accordance with justice. At the time when Israel made the calf and all those hosts died, the Angel of Death mingled himself among the women who were in the camp of Israel. As soon as Moses became aware of his presence among them he assembled all the male persons separately, and this is why Scripture says, "And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel", namely, the menfolk, whom he collected and set on one side. But the Angel of Death did not leave the women until the Tabernacle was erected, and even when the women were bringing their offerings to the Tabernacle he did not leave them until Moses, observing it, advised the menfolk not to come in company with them, and not to look at them face to face, but only over their shoulders. Scripture thus says: "And they came, namely, the men" (Ex. xxxv, 22), the expression "and they came", instead of "and they brought" indicating that they did not come alongside of the women, but kept them behind, as the Angel of Death did not depart from them until the Tabernacle was erected.

'Note that the Angel of Death is not found among women if their number is less than seven, or less than ten. That is to say, if seven women are together he is found among them and invokes judgement against men; but if there are no less than ten, he even demands the penalty of death. And it is

his presence among the women that is hinted at in the words, "And they came, namely, the men with the women" (*Ibid.*).' All that day, then, the Companions put themselves on their guard and absorbed themselves in the study of the Torah.

R. Simeon called attention to the verse: "And the Lord said unto Noah: Come thou and all thy house into the ark" (Gen. VII, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'has already been explained. But observe this. Could not the Holy One, blessed be He, have preserved Noah in some other way, as by putting him in some spot where the flood could not reach, [197a] in the same way as we read, in connection with Gideon, that "it was dry upon the fleece only" (Judges VI, 40); or even have preserved him in the Land of Israel, of which it is written, "nor was it rained upon in the day of indignation" (Ezek. XXII, 24)? But the truth is that, as soon as the Destroying Angel comes down into this world, whoever does not shut himself in, but exposes himself to his view, forfeits his life, and thus destroys himself. We learn this from Lot, in connection with whom it is written: "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee" (Gen. XIX 17). Why the warning "look not behind thee"? Because the Destroying Angel was stalking behind him, and had he turned his head and looked straight in the face of the angel, the latter would have been able to injure him. Hence it is written of Noah, "and the Lord shut him in" (*Ibid.* VII, 16), in order that Noah should not show himself before the Destroying Angel, and should so not fall into his power.' Now whilst the Companions were in concealment there died in the town thirteen men. R. Simeon said: 'Blessed be the Merciful One for that the Angel of Death did not look in your countenances!'

AND MOSES ASSEMBLED ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, ETC. He repeated all over again the instructions concerning the making of the Tabernacle. R. Hiya said: 'It is all as has already been explained. The actual making of the Tabernacle was carried out by Israel alone, without the mixed multitude. For that mixed multitude drew down the Angel of Death into the world. As soon, therefore, as Moses observed him he threw out

the mixed multitude and assembled the Israelites by themselves. This is the significance of the words, "And Moses assembled, etc." '

R. Simeon here expounded the verse: "Who hath ascended into heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in his garments? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?" (Prov. XXX, 4). 'This verse', he said, 'has already been explained. "Who hath ascended up into heaven?": this alludes to Moses, of whom it is written, "And unto Moses he said, Come up unto the Lord" (Ex. XXIV, 1). According to another interpretation, "Who ascended up into heaven" alludes to Elijah, of whom it is written, "and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings II, 11). It may be asked, How could Elijah have ascended into heaven, seeing that the heavens cannot endure even so much as a mustard seed of the matter of this world? How, then, can Scripture say, "and he ascended up by a whirlwind into heaven"? But it was with Elijah as with Moses. In connection with Moses it is first written: "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai" (Ex. XIX, 20), and further on it is written, "And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount" (*Ibid.* XXIV, 18). Now, inasmuch as the Holy One, blessed be He, was on Mount Sinai, regarding which it is written, "And the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount" (*Ibid.* XXIV, 17), how could Moses have entered into His presence? The answer is found in the words, "and Moses entered into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mount". This shows that Moses enveloped himself in the cloud as in a garment, and, having thus wrapped himself round, he was able to draw near to the "fire of the glory of the Lord". In a similar way, Elijah, of whom it is written, "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven", entered into that whirlwind and enveloped himself in it as in a garment, and in this way ascended on high. The following recondite passage is found in the Book of Adam the First Man, in describing the generations of mankind: "A certain spirit will one day come

down to earth and will clothe itself in an earthly body and will bear the name of Elijah. Whilst in that body he will soar aloft and, divesting himself of that body, enter within a whirlwind, where another and luminous body will have been prepared for him, so that he will be as an angel among angels. But whenever he will come down to earth he will invest himself again in the material body, which will remain in the lower world; and it is in this body that he will make himself visible on earth, whilst it is in the other body that he will appear on high." This is thus the recondite meaning of the words, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended". There was no other man whose spirit ascended to heaven and then descended to earth except Elijah. According to another interpretation, "who hath ascended up into heaven" is an allusion to Elijah, whereas "and descended" alludes to Jonah, whom the fish caused to sink into the nethermost depths of the sea. Jonah was only made possible by Elijah. Elijah ascended and Jonah descended, and the one as well as the other "requested for himself that he might die". Further, "who hath bound the waters" alludes to Elijah, who bound up in a bundle, as it were, all the waters of the world so that neither dew nor rain came down from heaven; "in his garment" alludes further to Elijah, who smote [197*b*] with his mantle to perform his miracles. "Who hath gathered the wind (*ruah* = spirit) in his fists?" is again an allusion to Elijah, who restored the spirit of a man to his body; "Who hath established all the ends of the earth?" still alludes to Elijah, who, after he had restrained the waters and adjured the heavens not to let rain fall, afterwards, by means of his prayer, restored life to the world by bringing back the rain, which produced an abundance of food for all. "What is his name?" refers to Elijah; "and what is his son's name?" refers again to Elijah. "His name" refers to Elijah when he ascended on high, and "his son's name" refers to Elijah when he comes down to earth and becomes a messenger to perform miracles; he bears, then, the same name of Elijah. According to another exposition: "Who hath ascended up into heaven?" refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, the allusion being contained in the word *Mi* (Who?), as explained

elsewhere. Here in this passage is contained the mystery of the Divine Chariot, consisting of the four directions of the world which are the four primordial elements, all of which depend on that supernal region called *Mi* (Who?), as already said.

'Observe this. When the hour arrives at which it pleases the Holy One, blessed be He, to unify the Supernal Chariot,[1] a voice issues from that divine supernal region called Heaven to assemble all the saints beneath and all the holy chiefs and supernal legions, so that they should all be in readiness together. Thus Scripture says, "And Moses assembled", "Moses" being an allusion to Heaven; while the words "all the congregation of the children of Israel" allude to the twelve supernal holy legions. The next words, "and said unto them . . . This is the thing . . . Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord", means, "prepare yourselves, all of you, to take and to bear upon you the glory of the Divine Throne so as to raise it aloft to the divine heights; appoint from among you those supernal glorified chiefs who shall take up that offering containing the mystery of the Divine Throne, in order to bring about a union with the "patriarchs",[2] for the Matrona (i.e. the Shekinah) may not come to her Spouse except those youthful bridesmaids follow in her train until she is brought to Him, as it says, "The virgins her companions in her train being brought unto thee" (Ps. XLV, 15), to wit, that she may join her Spouse. The next words, "Whosoever is of a noble heart", are an allusion to the four superior legions that contain within themselves all the other legions; it is these who issue forth with the exalted patriarchs called "nobles", as in the passage, "which the nobles of the people delved" (Num. XXI, 18), indicating the patriarchs. The verse continues, "let him bring it". The singular, "him", where we should expect "them", indicates the merging of them all into a unity. In the next words, "the Lord's offering", the accusative particle *eth* indicates the inclusion of all the other supernal legions which were to be integrated into one unity; their number is

[1] Al. "to combine the Supernal Chariot with the Lower Chariot". [2] Al. "with her spouse".

twelve, symbolized by "gold, and silver, and brass; and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair; and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia-wood; and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense". These are the twelve supernal legions, which are all comprised under the four sacred *Ḥayoth* mentioned before. All these ascend towards the Divine Throne, so as to take her up on high that she may join her Spouse, and that He should be with Her in surpassing glory. The Most High King then seats Himself on the Divine Throne in perfect unison with His Spouse, and joy is thus diffused through the universe. (Observe that Scripture here mentions gold before silver, the reason being that this is the scale of values here below; but when it enumerates according to the scale of values in the Heavenly Chariot, Scripture commences from the right and proceeds to the left. So we find it written: "Mine is the silver, and Mine the gold" (Haggai II, 8), first silver and then gold, but here below the left comes first and then the right, as it is written, "gold, and silver, and brass".) [198a] Now the phrase, "every noble-hearted", as already said, comprises those four legions who together are named noble-hearted; "the Lord's heave-offering" indicates the Divine Throne, so called because they raise it and cause it to ascend on high.[1] And it is for this reason that Ezekiel, in his vision of the ascending *Ḥayoth*, failed to see what it was that they were taking up with them, since it was the Matrona rising to join the Most High King in hidden and supreme glory. "And let every wise-hearted among you come and make all that the Lord hath commanded." This is an allusion to the sixty well-springs that feed the world and so are enjoined to come and bring with them from the treasury of life, by executing the commands of the Holy One, so as to benefit the world.'

TAKE YE FROM AMONG YOU AN OFFERING UNTO THE LORD. R. Judah discoursed on the verse: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry . . . ?" (Isa. LVIII, 7). 'Happy', he said, 'is the lot of him who happens to meet with a poor

[1] i.e. from the world of *beriah* to the world of *aziluth*.

man, as the poor man is a present that God has sent him. Whoever receives that present with a cheerful countenance, happy is his portion. See now. Whoever takes compassion on a poor man and quickens his soul, the Holy One counts it to him as though he had created his soul. Hence, because Abraham took compassion on all men, God counted it to him as though he had created them, as it is written, "and the souls that they had made (*'asu*) in Horan" (Gen. XII, 5). The term "*paros*" (breaking) has also the significance of "spreading", it being incumbent on the host to spread for the poor man a table-cloth for the bread and other food offered. Again, the term "*paros*", in its significance of "breaking", teaches that it is the proper thing to cut the bread for the poor man into slices, so that he should not feel ashamed, and that there should be no stinting: "thy bread", says Scripture, *thy* emphatically, thine own property, but not that gotten by robbery or violence or theft; for, in that case, so far from its being a source of merit, it will be a reminder, woe to him! of his sins. Similarly, in our text it says: "Take ye from among you an offering", from among *you* emphatically, but not from what has been gotten by violence, robbery or theft.'

R. Ḥiya and R. Isaac and R. Jose were walking together on the road when R. Abba met them. Said R. Ḥiya: 'Assuredly the Shekinah is with us.' R. Abba, when he came up with them, expounded the verse: "Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house, that my name might be there; but I chose David to be over my people Israel" (1 Kings VIII, 16). 'This verse', he said, 'does not seem to be logically constructed. It begins, "I chose no city", and ends, "but I chose David", instead of, as we should expect, "but I chose Jerusalem". What connection have the two with each other? But the truth is, that when it is the pleasure of the Holy One, blessed be He, to build a city, He first considers who shall be the leader of its people, and not until then does He build the city and bring the people into it. The verse then says, in effect, "I chose no city until I had observed David to be fitting shepherd of Israel." For a city

with all its inhabitants depends for its existence on the care of the people's shepherd and leader. If the latter be a good shepherd, it is well with him, well with the city, and well with the people; but if he be an evil shepherd, woe to him, woe to the city, and woe to the people!

'Thus, the Holy One, blessed be He, when He looked at the world and decided to build the city, first raised up David, as it says, "but I chose David", etc.' 'This is a new thought, what we have just heard', said his Companions.

R. Abba then further discoursed as follows. 'It is written, "Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope (*sibro*) is in the Lord his God" (Ps. CXLVI, 5). Why "the God of Jacob", and not "the God of Abraham", or "the God of Isaac"? The reason is that Jacob placed his trust neither in his father nor in his mother when he fled from his brother and went on his way alone, penniless, as Scripture says, "for with my staff I passed over this Jordan" (Gen. XXXII, 11), but he put his trust in the Almighty, as it is written, "If God will be with me, and will keep me" (*Ibid.* XXVIII, 20); and he made all his requests only to the Holy One, blessed be He, who granted them to him. Further, the term "*sibro*" (whose hope) can also be read (by a change in the diacritical point) *shibro* (being bruised), pointing to the righteous who are content to be broken and bruised and to submit to tribulation upon tribulation, and all for the sake of "the Lord his God. So Scripture says: "Nay, but for thy sake are we killed all [198*b*] the day" (Ps. XLIV, 23); and further, "Because for they sake we[1] have borne reproach" (*Ibid.* LXIX, 8). This was exemplified in Jacob, of whom it is written: "Now Jacob saw that there was crushing[2] in Egypt" (Gen. XLII, 1), indicating that Jacob foresaw the calamity of the exile that he would undergo in Egypt, but he placed his confidence in the Holy One, blessed be He. Similarly, the children of Jacob endured the calamity of exile, and yet did not deviate from the essence of the faith of their ancestors, the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, always having been, in the midst of the exile, on their lips. Hence the words of Moses:

[1] The text of the Zohar wrongly quotes "we" instead of "I". [2] *Sheber* = corn; also = crushing, breaking, misfortune.

"and they shall say unto me: What (*mah*) is his name" (Ex. III, 13), signifying that the Israelites knew the Holy One, blessed be He, at no time having forgotten Him, but having suffered the pangs of exile for His sake. For the sake of this they merited redemption and great miracles and signs. Now, you exalted saints who endure bodily affliction in wandering from place to place for the sake of the Holy One, blessed be He, how much more are you worthy that miracles and acts of redemption should be performed for you, and that you should win the life of the world to come!'

They then proceeded on their journey together, and R. Abba then opened a discourse on the text: "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord, whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it", etc. 'Observe', he said, 'that when a man wills to serve his Master, his desire is first generated in the heart, which is the basis and the active principle of the whole body. From thence the desire is diffused through all the members of the body, so that the desire of the rest of the members of the body, and the desire of the heart, unite into one whole and draw upon themselves the resplendence of the Shekinah to reside with them. Such a man becomes himself, as it were, a portion of the Holy One, blessed be He. Scripture thus says: "Take you from among you", or, in other words, "take you of your very selves, and become yourselves an offering and a portion for the Lord. And so that no one should say that this is not within man's power, observe the sentence saying, "whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, the Lord's offering". Assuredly so, whosoever is of a willing heart may draw unto himself the Shekinah, may bring her (*yebieha*) from on high, may draw her from the supernal region to reside with him; and when she comes to reside with him, how many blessings, and how much riches, does she bring with her! So Scripture says, "gold, and silver, and brass", so that nothing is lacking for him of all the riches of the world. This', R. Abba concluded, 'is for the rest of mankind, but you exalted saints, "take from among *you* an offering unto the Lord".[1] Said

[1] i.e. the Shekinah is already among you, and you must raise Her on high.

R. Hiya: 'He who has begun to take an offering, let him continue in the work.'

R. Abba then discoursed on the text: "And the Lord (had) said unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land" (Jonah II, 11). 'Where and when did God speak to the fish?' he asked. 'It was', he replied, 'at the time of Creation, when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world; to wit, on the fifth day, when He created the fishes of the sea. Then He ordained and appointed a certain fish to swallow up Jonah and retain him in its body three days and three nights and then eject him. And not only in this case, but with all that He created did God make certain stipulations. Thus, on the first day, when He created the heavens, He stipulated with them that they should take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, and so it was, as it is written, "and Elijah went up[1] by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings II, 11). On the same day He created the light and stipulated with it that the sun should become darkened in Egypt three days, as it is written, "and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days" (Ex. X, 22). On the second day He created the firmament to divide the waters from the waters, and in doing so He stipulated that they should separate between defilement and purity on behalf of Israel and be to them a means of cleansing, and so it was. On the third day He made the dry land emerge from the waters and caused the waters to be gathered together into one place, forming from them the sea, and He stipulated with it that it should allow the Israelites to pass through it on dry land and then overwhelm the Egyptians. And so it happened, as it is written, "and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared" (Ex. XIV, 27), where the term *l'ethano* (to its strength), by a transposition of letters, can be read *litnao* (to its stipulation). In addition, God stipulated with the earth that it should open its mouth on the occasion of the rebellion of Korah and swallow him up with all his company. And so it happened. On the fourth day he created the sun and the moon, and He stipulated with the sun that he should stand still in the midst of heaven

[1] And it does not say, "and God took up", by a special act.

in the days of Joshua [199a]; He also stipulated with the stars that they should wage war against Sisera. On the fifth day He created the fishes of the sea and the birds of heaven. With the birds he stipulated that they should feed Elijah when he restrained the heaven from rain, as it is written: "and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there" (1 Kings XVII, 4); and He stipulated with the fishes of the sea to appoint one fish that should swallow up Jonah and then eject him. On the sixth day He created Adam and stipulated with him that a woman should descend from him who should sustain Elijah, as it is written, "Behold I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee" (*Ibid.* XVII, 9). Similarly, in regard to every unique phenomenon that has happened in the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, had predestined it from the time when the world was created. And so here the meaning of "And the Lord said to the fish" is that He had commanded it at the creation of the world.

'In the story of Jonah we have a representation of the whole of a man's career in this world. Jonah descending into the ship is symbolic of man's soul that descends into this world to enter into his body. Why is she called Jonah (lit. aggrieved)? Because as soon as she becomes partner with the body in this world she finds herself full of vexation. Man, then, is in this world as in a ship that is traversing the great ocean and is like to be broken, as it says, "so that the ship was like to be broken" (Jonah I, 4). Furthermore, man in this world commits sins, imagining that he can flee from the presence of his Master, who takes no notice of this world. The Almighty then rouses a furious tempest; to wit, man's doom, which constantly stands before the Holy One, blessed be He, and demands his punishment. It is this which assails the ship and calls to mind man's sins that it may seize him; and the man is thus caught by the tempest and is struck down by illness, just as Jonah "went down into the innermost part of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep". Although the man is thus prostrated, his soul does not exert itself to return to his Master in order to make good his omissions. So "the shipmaster came to him", to wit, the good prompter, who is the general steersman, "and said

unto him: What meanest thou that thou sleepest? Arise, call upon thy God", etc.; it is not a time to sleep, as they are about to take thee up to be tried for all that thou hast done in this world. Repent of thy sins. Reflect on these things and return to thy Master. "What is thine occupation", wherein thou wast occupied in this world; and make confession concerning it before the Master; "and whence comest thou"; to wit, from a fetid drop, and so be not thou arrogant before him. "What is thy country"—reflect that from earth thou wast created and to earth thou wilt return; "and of what people art thou"; that is, reflect whether thou canst rely on merits of thy forbears to protect thee. When they bring him to judgement before the Heavenly Tribunal, that tempest, that is none other than the judgement doom which raged against him, demands from the King the punishment of all the King's prisoners, and then all the King's counsellors appear before Him one by one, and the Tribunal is set up. Some plead in defence of the accused, others against him. Should the man be found guilty, as in the case of Jonah, then "the men rowed hard to bring it to the land, but they could not"; so those who plead on his behalf find points in his favour and strive to restore him to this world, but they cannot; "for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them", the prosecution storms and rages against him, and, convicting him of his sins, prevails against his defenders. Then three appointed messengers descend upon the man; one of them makes a record of all the good deeds and the misdeeds that he has performed in this world; one casts up the reckoning of his days; and the third is the one who has accompanied the man from the time when he was in his mother's womb. As already said, the doom summons is not appeased until "they took up Jonah", until they take him from the house to the place of burial. Then proclamation is made concerning him. If he was a righteous man, it runs, Render honour to the King's image! "He entereth into peace, they rest in their beds, each one that walketh in his uprightness" (Isa. LVII, 2). [199*b*] But when a wicked man dies, the proclamation runs: Woe to that man, it would have been better for him had he never been born!

Regarding such a man it is written, "and they cast him forth into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging", that is, only after they have placed him in the grave, which is the place of judgement, does the judgement summons cease from its raging. For the fish that swallowed him is, in fact, the grave; and so "Jonah was in the belly of the fish", which is identified with "the belly of the underworld" (*Sheol*), as is proved by the passage, "Out of the belly of the underworld (*sheol*) cried I". "Three days and three nights": these are the three days that a man lies in his grave before his belly splits open. After three days it ejects the putrid matter on his face, saying: "Take back what thou gavest me; thou didst eat and drink all day and never didst thou give anything to the poor; all thy days were like feasts and holidays, whilst the poor remained hungry without partaking of any of thy food. Take back what thou gavest me." In regard to this it is written: "and I will spread dung upon your faces", etc. (Malachi II, 3). Again, after the lapse of three days, the man receives chastisement in each organ—in his eyes, his hands, and his feet. This continues for thirty days, during which time the soul and the body are chastised together. The soul therefore remains all that time on earth below, not ascending to her place, like a woman remaining apart all the days of her impurity. After that the soul ascends whilst the body is being decomposed in the earth, where it will lie until the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will awaken the dead. A voice will then resound through the graves, proclaiming: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of light, and the earth shall cast forth the dead (*rephaim*)" (Isa. XXVI, 19). That will come to pass when the Angel of Death will depart from the world, as it is written: "He will destroy death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth" (*Ibid.* XXV, 8). It is of that occasion that it is written: "And the Lord spoke unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land"; for as soon as that voice will resound among the graves they will all cast out the dead bodies that they contain. The term *rephaim* (the dead) being akin to

the root, *rapha* (healing), indicates that the dead will be restored to their former physical condition. But, you may say, is it not written elsewhere, "the *rephaim* will not rise" (*Ibid.* XXVII, 14)? The truth is that all the dead will be restored to their former state whilst in the graves, but some of them will rise and others will not. Happy is the portion of Israel, of whom it is written, "My dead bodies shall arise" (*Ibid.* XXVII, 19). Thus in the narrative of that fish we find words of healing for the whole world. As soon as it swallowed Jonah it died, but after three days was restored to life and vomited him forth. In a similar way the Land of Israel will in the future first be stirred to new life, and afterwards "the earth will cast forth the dead".

'It has been affirmed that in quitting this world a man has to endure seven ordeals. The first is the judgement of heaven when the spirit leaves the body. The second is when his actions and utterances march in front of him and make proclamation concerning him. The third is when he is placed in the grave. The fourth is the ordeal of the grave itself. The fifth consists in his being consumed by the worms. The sixth is the suffering endured in Gehenna. The seventh ordeal is that his spirit is condemned to roam to and fro in the world, and is not able to find a resting place until his appointed tasks have been completed. Hence it behoves man continually to review his actions and to repent before his Master. When David reflected on these ordeals which a man has to endure he made haste to exclaim: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all my inward parts, bless his holy name" (Ps. CIII, 1), as much as to say: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, before thou quittest the world, whilst thou still inhabitest the body; and all my inward parts, all the members of the body that are in union with the spirit, whilst this union still lasts, hasten to bless His holy name, before the time will come when you will not be able to bless or to repent." David therefore repeats again: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, Hallelujah" (*Ibid.* CIII, 22).'

R. Abba ceased, and the Companions approached him and kissed him on his head. R. Hiya then began a discourse on the text: [200a] *Take ye from among you an offering* (*t'rumah*)

unto the Lord. 'When God', he said, 'created the world, He did so for no other purpose than that Israel should one day come and receive the Torah. It was by means of the Torah that the world was created, and it is on the Torah that the world is established. So Scripture says: "Were it not for my covenant that endureth day and night, the ordinances of heaven and earth I would not have appointed" (Jer. XXXIV, 25). The Torah is length of life in this world and in the world to come. And he who labours in the Torah labours in the Palace of the Holy One, blessed be He, inasmuch as the supernal Temple of the Holy One is the Torah itself. And whenever a man labours in the Torah, there the Holy One, blessed be He, stands and listens to his voice, as it is written: "And the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi III, 16); and that man escapes three ordeals—the ordeal of this world, the ordeal of the Angel of Death, who has no power over him, and the ordeal of Gehenna. What is the "book of remembrance"? It is an allusion to the duplicate Book which is at once above and below.[1] The term "remembrance" is a designation of the region of the holy covenant and concentrates and gathers within itself the whole of the supernal life-energy. Hence, "book of remembrance" signifies the two grades that are yet one.[2] This is the underlying mystery of the "name YHVH", of which the Name is one and YHVH is one, yet the two are only one. For there is name and name. There is the name on high[3] that is the sign of the unknown, of that which is above and outside all knowledge—it is the supernal point; and there is the name below which is expressive of the central point here below. So Scripture says: "from the one end of the heaven unto the other" (Deut. IV, 32), that is, from the supernal point that concentrates within itself all the supernal life-energy "unto the lower end of heaven", which bears the name "lower central point".[4] This point is identical with the "book", and, being in the centre, it unites within itself all the world's directions; six directions come to a union in the supernal book

[1] *v.* Zohar, Ex., 70a. [2] *Malkuth* and *Yesod*. [3] *Hokmah*. [4] *Malkuth*.

which is above and over them, and six directions find their union again in the lower book which is above and over them; and the two, the supernal book and the lower book, constitute together the Law (Torah), the one the written Law, it being undisclosed and only to be revealed in the world to come, the other the oral Law. Of the written Law the writing is made, as it were, into a Palace of the central point, wherein the Law is concealed. The lower Law, on the other hand, is not embodied in writing, and hence is not constructed into a Palace for the central point beneath as is the superior Law for the supernal point. Hence, also, the oral Law is designated *t'rumah* (heave-offering, something separated), being apart and separated. I have further heard from the Sacred Lamp (R. Simeon) that the *t'rumah* is meant to be resolved into *tre* (two) and *meah* (hundred), indicating two out of a hundred. For the sum of the holy grades involved in the mystery of Faith, by which the Holy One, blessed be He, manifests Himself, amounts to ten, and these are also ten utterances. The whole thus amounts to a hundred; and so in bringing an offering[1] we have to combine the lower central point with the supernal central point, so as to unite the Shekinah with her Spouse, these being the two of the hundred grades and sub-grades just mentioned.

'Observe too that every day a proclamation goes forth, saying, "O ye peoples, this thing depends on your own effort". And this is the sense of the words, [200b] "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord", not as a burden, but "whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring her (*yevieha*)".[2] From this we learn that prayer offered with concentrated devotion by a man that fears his Master produces great effects on high, as already said elsewhere. First come the songs and hymns chanted by the angels on high, and the series of hymns recited by Israel here below. With these the Shekinah decks and adorns herself like a woman who prepares to meet her spouse. Then follows the recital of

[1] A side allusion to the heave-offering (*t'rumah*) due to the priest which, according to the Mishnah, normally consisted of a fiftieth part (2/100) of the produce. [2] i.e. the Shekinah.

prayer. By virtue of the prayer they recite while sitting they adorn her bridesmaids and all her retinue. By the time "True and firm"[1] is reached, the bride with all her attendant damsels is fully arrayed. When the worshippers reach "who hast redeemed Israel",[2] the whole assembly has to stand up. For at the moment "true and firm" is reached the bride's attendants accompany her towards the Most High King, but when it comes to "who hast redeemed Israel", the Holy and Most High King appears in His grades and comes out to receive her; and we must then stand on our feet in awe and trembling before the Most High King, as it is the moment when he stretches forth His right hand towards Her, and then puts His left hand under her head, then there is a mutual embracing and kisses. This comes to pass during the first three benedictions. It behoves, then, a man to concentrate his thoughts and to focus his mind on these great effects and on the ordering of the prayer. His mouth, his heart, his thoughts, must all work in unison. The Most High King and the Matrona being then in close and joyful embrace, whosoever has a petition to offer let him do so now, as it is an opportune moment. After having made his request of the King and the Matrona, he must then concentrate his thought and mind upon the last three benedictions so as to excite the inner delight, since by these benedictions the Shekinah is blessed with another embrace, in which he takes his departure. Withal, it should be his intention that the denizens of this world also should be blessed. The worshipper has next to fall on his face in token of surrender of his soul, among all the souls and spirits which the Shekinah at that moment collects in the "bundle of life". This I have heard among the mysteries expounded to me by the Sacred Lamp, who has not permitted me to reveal it save to you, O exalted saints. For whosoever surrenders his soul so at that moment will be bound in the bundle of life in this world and in the world to come. Moreover, it is important that the King and the Matrona should be united both above and below, and be crowned with a crown wrought

[1] Benediction following the recital of Sh'ma and preceding the 'Amidah. [2] Conclusion of above-mentioned benediction.

of the souls above and the souls below; and whosoever concentrates his mind and heart on all this and surrenders his soul in complete devotion, the Holy One, blessed be He, names him "peace" below after the pattern of the peace above, as we read, "and the Lord called him peace" (Judges VI, 24). And when that man's soul quits this world it ascends and cleaves its way through all the heavens, and nothing can stop it, the Holy One, blessed be He, proclaiming: "He entereth into peace" (Isa. LVII, 2), and the Shekinah adding, "may they rest in their beds", etc. (*Ibid.*); and they open up for it [201*a*] thirteen mountains of pure perfume, without let or hindrance. Hence, happy is the man who concentrates his thought on this. This, then, is the sense of "whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, the Lord's offering", to wit, toward the Most High King.' R. Abba then lifted up his voice and said: 'Woe ! O Rabbi Simeon ! thou art living and we weep concerning thee; but we weep not for thee, we weep for the Companions and for the world. R. Simeon is like a bright lamp which throws light above and below. Alas for the world, for the time when the lower illumination will pass away and be absorbed in the upper illumination ! Who will then diffuse through the world the light of the Torah ?' R. Abba then rose and kissed R. Hiya, saying: 'You were in possession of these thoughts, hence the Holy One, blessed be He, sent me hither to become one of your company. Happy is my portion !'

R. Jose then followed with a discourse on the text: *And let every wise-hearted man among you come and make, etc.* 'This passage', he said, 'has already been expounded. When God said to Moses, "Get you wise men and men of discernment" (Deut. I, 13), the latter searched the whole of Israel but did not find men of discernment; it is thus written, "So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men, and full of knowledge" (*Ibid.* I, 15), without mentioning men of discernment. Assuredly the man of discernment (*naban*) is of a higher degree than the wise man (*ḥakham*). Even a pupil who gives new ideas to his teacher is called "wise". A wise man, then, it is true, knows for himself as much as is required, but the man of discernment apprehends the whole, knowing both

his own point of view and that of others. The term "wise-hearted" is used here because the seat of wisdom is the heart. As for the man of discernment, he apprehends the lower world and the upper world, his own being and the being of others.'

R. Jose further discoursed on the verse: "And He said unto me: Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3). 'Observe', he said, 'that there is an outer and bodily worship of the Holy One, blessed be He, and an inner and spiritual worship which is the true and genuine worship. The body possesses twelve members that participate in rendering worship. These are the outer members of the body, but there are also twelve inner members whose act of worship is of benefit to the spirit. For this is the inner and precious worship of the Holy One, blessed be He, as expounded among the mysteries taught by R. Simeon, and as belonging to the mysteries of supernal wisdom known to the Companions, happy is their portion ! Prayer is spiritual worship. Deep mysteries are attached to it, for men wot not that a man's prayer cleaves the ethereal spaces, cleaves the firmament, opens doors and ascends on high. At the moment of daybreak, when light emerges from darkness, a proclamation resounds through all the firmaments, saying: Make yourselves ready, ye sentinels at the doors, chiefs of the Palace—each one to his post ! For the day-attendants are not the same as the night-attendants, the two groups replacing each other with the succession of day and night. This is alluded to in the passage, "the greater light for to rule the day", etc. (Gen. I, 16), "the rule of the day" and "the rule of the night" signifying the day-attendants and the night-attendants. When night arrives proclamation is made, saying: Make yourselves ready, O ye rulers of the night—each [201*b*] one to his place ! Similarly, when day breaks a proclamation goes forth: Make yourselves ready, ye rulers of the day—each one to his place ! Each one thus, following the proclamation, is assigned his suitable place. The Shekinah then descends whilst Israel enter the Synagogue to offer praise to their Master in song and hymn. It behoves, then, every man, after equipping himself with

emblems of holiness,[1] to attune his heart and his inner being for that act of worship and to say his prayers with devotion. For the words that he utters ascend on high, for the scrutiny of angelic supervisors. These abide in ethereal space on the four sides of the world. On the eastern side there is the chief supervisor, whose name is Gezardiya, and who is attended by a number of other chieftains, all awaiting the word of prayer that is about to ascend to the ethereal realm on that side. The moment it does so the supervisor takes it up. If it be fitly uttered, he, together with all the other chieftains, kisses that utterance and carries it aloft into the supernal firmament, where other chieftains are awaiting it. When kissing the utterance of prayer they say: "Happy are ye, O Israel, who know how to crown your Master with holy crowns. Happy is the mouth from which issued this utterance, this crown." Then the letters of the Divine Name that abide in the ethereal space soar upwards. That Divine Name is formed of twelve letters, and is the one by which Elijah flew to the ethereal regions until he reached heaven. This is indicated in the words that Obadiah spoke to Elijah, saying, ". . . that the spirit of the Lord (YHVH) will carry thee. . . ." For it was that Name by which Elijah flew upwards, and it is that Name that rules the ethereal space. The letters, then, of the Name fly upwards with the prayer-utterance, in company with the chief who holds the keys of the ether, and all the other chiefs, until heaven is reached, where the prayer is taken in charge by another chief to carry it still higher. On the southern side there is another chieftain ruling over the ethereal space of that region and having under him a number of supervisors and officers. His name is Pesagniyah, and he is in charge of the keys of the ethereal space in that quarter. Now the prayer of persons in deep sorrow and anguish, if uttered with due devotion, ascends into that region and is taken up by the chief, who kisses it and pronounces over it the words, "The Holy One, blessed be He, be merciful towards thee and be filled with compassion on thy behalf." Then all the chieftains and officers administering that region accompany it upwards,

[1] Fringes and phylacteries.

along with the letters of the Divine Name—to wit, the Name of four letters that rule that region—until it reaches the heaven over that region. There it is taken in charge by the chief of that region. The name of the one in charge of the northerly region, who also has under his command a number of chieftains and officers, is Petahyah. He is appointed over that side to which prayers offered for deliverance from enemies ascend. If such a prayer be found worthy, the chief takes it up and kisses it. Then a spirit emerges out of the abyss in the North who makes proclamation through all the ethereal spaces, so that they all take up that prayer and carry it into heaven, all the while kissing it and exclaiming, "May thy Master cast thy enemy down before thee." It then ascends and cleaves the heavens.[1] When it reaches the first heaven it is met by the chief of the West, whose name is Zebuliel, and who presides over numerous chieftains and officers that stand sentry over nine doors. The same Zebuliel would fain minister in that heaven in the daytime, but he is not permitted until moonlight appears, when he comes out with all those legions and chieftains. But when day breaks they all retire through one, the most prominent of the nine doors. Now any ascending prayer [202a] enters through that door, and then all officers and chieftains, under the guidance of Zebuliel their chief, emerge through that door. They embrace it, and accompany it to the second heaven. That heaven is fitted with twelve gates, at the twelfth of which there stands a chief, named 'Anael, who is in command of numerous hosts and legions. And when the prayer arrives there that chief loudly orders all those doors to be opened, exclaiming, "Open ye the gates", etc. (Isa. xxvi, 2). All the gates then open, and the prayer enters through all the doors. Then arises a chief, ancient of days, who is placed at the northern side, and whose name is 'Azriel the Ancient, though sometimes he is called Mahniel (lit. mighty camp). This other name is given him because he commands sixty myriads of legions. All these legions are winged, part of them are full of eyes, and by their side are others full of ears. These are called "ears" because they listen to all those who pray

[1] Al. and ethereal spaces.

in a whisper, from the heart, so that the prayer should not be overheard by anyone else. Only such a prayer is accepted by these "all-eared" legions, whereas a prayer that is heard by the ears of man is not listened to on high, and so remains unheard by anyone save by him who overheard it at first. Hence it behoves man to be careful not to let others hear his prayer. Furthermore, prayer becomes absorbed in the upper world, and the speech of the upper world should remain inaudible. Similarly, in the reading of the Book of the Law, while one reads, the other standing by him should be silent. For, if two read together faith is diminished, because voice and utterance are only one. For only a single voice and a single recital must be heard; so that if there are two voices and two utterances there is a diminution of Divine Faith. When the silent prayer soars aloft, all those sixty myriads of legions, all those "all-eye" and "all-ear" hosts, come forward and kiss it. So Scripture says: "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Ps. XXXIV, 16), indicating the "all-eye" and the "all-ear" legions. From thence the prayer mounts to the third heaven, the chief of which is Gedariah, who has under him numerous officers and chiefs. He ministers three times a day in the presence of a ray of light that is constantly shooting up and down in that heaven without ever being still. And when the prayer mounts up there that ray descends and bows down before it. Then the chief of that heaven, after bowing down to the prayer, strikes with the ray of light against a mighty rock that is placed in the centre of that heaven, and there emerge from it three hundred and seventy-five legions that have been confined within it since the day the Torah came down to earth. They were so confined because they endeavoured to prevent the Torah descending on earth, and God rebuked and shut them up in the interior of that rock, whence they do not emerge save at the time when prayer ascends. They then break forth into song, chanting: "O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is thy name . . . above the heavens" (Ps. VIII, 2). They then bow to the prayer, after which it is crowned with supernal crowns and mounts up into the fourth heaven. Then comes forth the sun and

Shamshiel (=mighty sun or sun of God) the chief enters that heaven accompanied by three hundred and sixty-five legions called days of the solar year, and they all crown that prayer with crowns of sweet perfume of the Garden of Eden. There it tarries until all those legions accompany it into the fifth heaven, the chief of which is Gadriel. This angel is in charge of the wars waged among the nations, but as soon as the prayer arives there a trembling seizes him with all his hosts so that [202b] their strength is enfeebled; and they come forward and bow down to the prayer, and crown it and accompany it into the sixth heaven. There numerous hosts and legions come out to receive it and ascend with it until they reach a series of seventy gates in charge of a chief whose name is 'Anpiel. He crowns the prayer with seventy crowns. Then all the hosts and legions of all these heavens join together and take up that prayer, crowned with all these crowns, into the seventh heaven. Finally Sandalphon, the supreme chief, the keeper of all his Master's keys, introduces the prayer into the seven Palaces, to wit, the Palaces of the King. When the prayer enters there, decorated with all those crowns, it combines them all into one heavenly crown, each prayer according to its rank. And the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is crowned on all sides, above and below, so that the whole forms a unity. Of this Scripture says: "Blessings are upon the head of the righteous" (Prov. X, 6). Happy is the portion of the man who knows the proper way in which to order his prayer. The Holy One, blessed be He, being glorified in such a prayer, awaits the completion of all the prayers of Israel, so that the whole is fitly harmonized, both the above and the below.

'So far we have spoken of prayer. But there are in addition certain precepts that are bound up, not with action, but with the words of prayer. These are in number six. The first is "to fear the glorious and awful Name" (Deut. XXVIII, 58); the second is "to love Him" (*Ibid.* X, 12); the third is to bless Him; the fourth is to proclaim His unity; the fifth enjoins the priests to bless the people; the sixth bids man to surrender his soul to Him. These six precepts are bound up with the words of prayer, just as there are other precepts

that are connected with the action of prayer, such as those of the fringes and phylacteries. Now the injunction "to fear the Name" is accomplished by means of the hymns and songs that King David chanted, and of the sacrifices ordained by the Torah. For it behoves man to be filled thereby with fear of his Master, for those hymns belong to a region called "Fear" (*yir'ah*),[1] and all the *Hallelujahs* are emblematic of the fear of the Holy One,[2] blessed be He; it thus behoves man to attune his mind to a spirit of awe in the recital of those hymns. In arriving at "Praised be" it behoves a man to concentrate his thoughts on the Holy One, blessed be He, in that benediction which reads: "Blessed art Thou . . . who formest light . . . Blessed art Thou, O Lord creator of the universe." The precept, "to love Him", is realized in the benediction commencing with "With abundant love", which is followed by the reading of "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . .", containing the mystery of the love of the Holy One, blessed be He. And we proclaim His unity when we recite "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One", as that declaration contains the secret of God's oneness. After the reading of these sections comes the passage wherein we mention our exodus from Egypt, in fulfilment of the injunction, "But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt" (Deut. XXIV, 18). There follows the pronouncement of the blessing of the people by the priests in order to embrace all Israel at the moment when they receive blessings. For at that moment the Community of Israel receives blessings, and it is a propitious moment to surrender our souls to Him in the full willingness of our heart when we fall on our faces and recite the Psalm: "Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul . . ." (Ps. XXV, 1), which should be the expression of our full and complete self-surrender to Him. These are the six precepts that are bound up with our daily prayer, and that comprise in a way the six hundred precepts of the Torah. If you ask, What of the thirteen left over,[3] these are a category apart designed to

[1] *Malkuth*. [2] Because the word Hallelujah has the same numerical value as *Elohim*, signifying the attribute of Justice. [3] There being, according to the Rabbinic reckoning, six hundred and thirteen precepts.

draw upon us the thirteen attributes of mercy that comprise all the precepts. These are the six precepts by which prayer is embroidered. Happy is the portion of whoever concentrates his heart and will on them and realizes [203a] them every day. With these precepts many others are interwoven, but at each particular passage it behoves man to concentrate his heart and will on the particular precept contained in that passage. Such a man is praised aloud in the words contained in the passage: "And He said unto me: Thou art My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3).'

R. Jose ceased, and R. Abba went up to him and kissed him; and R. Isaac next began a discourse on the text: *And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel, etc.* 'The object', he said, 'of this assembling was to give them anew the law of the Sabbath. For the previous promulgation of the Sabbath before the Israelites made the golden calf was not observed by the mixed multitude. When they heard the words, "between Me and the children of Israel" (Ex. XXXI, 17), they said in protest: Are we then to be excluded from this? Straightway, "the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron", etc. (*Ibid.* XXXII, 1), and many were they that followed them. Then, after the guilty ones were put to death, Moses assembled the children of Israel separately and gave them the Sabbath anew, saying: "Six days shall work be done . . . Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." Herein is involved the mystery of the Sabbath, the supreme mystery that is only revealed to those versed in the Supreme Wisdom. On the sixth day, when the time of evening arrives, a brilliant star appears in the north accompanied by seventy other stars. That star smites the others, absorbing them all into itself, so that one takes the place of seventy. The same star then becomes enlarged, and is made into a fiery mass, blazing on all sides. The flaming mass then extends itself round a thousand thousand mountains, becoming in the process a mere thread. After this the fiery mass draws out from within itself a variety of colours. The first is a green colour. When that colour appears, the fiery mass raises itself and plunges into the midst of the green colour, occupying the inner part

of it. Then the fiery mass of the star attracts within itself the white colour. Then it ascends on high and plunges again in the midst of that colour, occupying its interior. The same is repeated with the whole gamut of colours, all of which it thrusts outside, concentrating itself more and, more in the middle until it approaches that hidden point to derive light therefrom.'

At this point R. Isaac quoted the verse: "And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire flashing up, so that a brightness was round about it; and out of the midst thereof as the form of electrum (*ḥashmal*), out of the midst of the fire" (Ezek. I, 4). 'Ezekiel', he said, 'saw this vision with a completeness which is only possible when the above-mentioned star is in the ascendant. The "stormy wind" has been explained as being a reference to the storm that came to subdue the whole world before the wicked Nebuchadnezzar. But in reality the "stormy wind" is identical with the star that swallowed up the other seventy stars; and it is the same "stormy wind" that Elijah saw "rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks" (1 Kings XIX, 11); it is, moreover, the force that continually protects the inward part as the membrane protects the brain. It is called "stormy wind" because it shakes the upper world and the lower worlds; it "came out of the north", from the side of which it is said, "Out of the north the evil shall break forth" (Jer. I, 14), for many other sinister forces were united within that "stormy wind"; hence its origin was the north. "A great cloud": so called because it represents the dross of the gold that concentrates itself in the north and forms the central point of destruction;[1] and being skilled in the arts of seduction it obtains power within the inhabited region, save in the Land of Israel, where, during the time Israel dwelt therein, it had no power; but after Israel sinned it obtained power, even in the Holy Land, as Scripture says: "He hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy" (Lam. II, 3). "A great cloud" indicates the cloud of darkness that darkened the whole world. Observe the difference between this cloud and the

[1] v, p. 184*b*.

other cloud. Of the other cloud [203*b*] it is written: "And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day" (Num. X, 34), also, "and thy cloud standeth over them" (*Ibid.* XIV, 14), indicating the bright and luminous cloud wherein there are visible all varieties of light. But this cloud is the cloud of utter darkness that prevents any light whatever from penetrating through it. Really it is insignificant, but it is called a "great cloud" when it obtains sway. Alternatively, it is called "great", on account of its darkness, which is so intense that it hides and makes invisible all the sources of light, thus overshadowing the whole world. "With a fire flashing up" indicates the fire of rigorous judgement that never departs from it. "And a brightness was round about it": that is, although it is all that has been described, yet "a brightness was round about it". From here we learn that, although it is the very region of defilement, yet it is surrounded by a certain brightness, and hence we may not thrust it completely out; it possesses an aspect of holiness, and hence should not be treated with contempt, but should be allowed a part in the side of holiness. Rab Hamnuna the elder took this phrase interrogatively, thus: "is there a brightness round about it?", implying that it may be treated with contempt, since its brightness is concealed within it and is not visible from without. And because the brightness is within, the verse continues, "and out of the midst thereof", to wit, of the midst of that brightness, "as the form of *ḥashmal*" (electrum). The term *ḥashmal* has been interpreted as being composed of *ḥash* and *mal*, meaning *Ḥayoth* (order of angels), of quivering fire.[1] From the Sacred Lamp (R. Simeon), however, we have heard in exposition of this the following most recondite doctrine. As long as the foreskin rests upon the sign of the holy covenant, the holy principle is prevented from disclosing the mystery of the convenantal sign. But when the bright light enters therein and separates between foreskin and holiness, the result is *ḥash-mal*, to wit, there is a speedy uncovering of circumcision.[2]

'To resume. On the sixth day, when the evening approaches,

[1] The term *ḥashmal* is resolved into *ḥayoth* (beasts), *esh* (fire), *mallel* (mutter or quiver). [2] *Ḥash* = speedy, *mal* = circumcision.

that blazing fire we have mentioned plunges into the midst of the colours. It is then that Israel here below prepare themselves for the Sabbath, arrange their meals, and lay their tables, each one according to his means. Then a tongue of fire emerges and strikes against that flame, so that both of them are hurled down into the cavern of the great abyss. There they remain imprisoned. That tongue of fire is of the side of the Right, and it is in virtue of that that it sweeps away the blaze of fire and confines it to the great abyss, where it abides until the Sabbath ends. At the conclusion of the Sabbath it behoves every Israelite to pronounce a benediction over fire, so that the tongue of fire, under the force of that benediction, re-emerges, retaining its command over the flame, and keeping it in subjection all that night. Observe that the moment the Sabbath begins and that blaze of fire is imprisoned, all fires of the harmful kind are similarly hidden away and supressed, including even the fire of Gehinnom, so that the sinners obtain a respite. Indeed, there is then a period of rest for all, both in the upper worlds and in the lower worlds. At the conclusion of the Sabbath, when Israel say the blessing over the light, all the fires that were hidden away re-emerge and return each to its place. Now it is in order to prevent any other fire being awakened that the injunction is given: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day". But it may be asked, What about the fire on the altar ? The following is the explanation. Immediately on the entrance of the Sabbath, proclamation is made in all the heavens, saying: Make ready, O ye Chariot teams and legions, to meet your Master! Following this there comes forth out of the south a spirit that spreads itself [204*a*] over all those Chariot teams and legions of the side of the Right, who are wrapt with it as with a garment. That spirit is thus called " the solemn robe of the Sabbath". Then the tables of this world are prepared in a certain Palace. Happy is the portion of the man whose table here below appears there properly laid, everything prepared in the best manner, according to his means, so that he has no cause to feel ashamed.

'When the Sabbath comes in it is incumbent on the holy

people to wash away from themselves the marks of their weekday labour. For what reason ? Because during the weekdays a different spirit roams about and hovers over the people, and it is in order to divest himself of that spirit and invest himself with another spirit, a spirit sublime and holy, that he must wash away the stains of the workaday world. The inner meaning of this action is as follows. All the six days are concentrated within one sacred point, where they form a unity. There is another sextet of days that stand without and belong to the "other side". Now, for holy Israel, for all those who lead a holy life during all the week, all the six days become as one with those six days that are within and that are concentrated into that central point wherein they are kept and guarded. That point, again, is hidden during the six days, but at the entrance of the Sabbath it rises on high, where it is decorated and becomes unified with the whole cycle of days, all of whom become absorbed by it. Observe this. There are days and days. There are common weekdays, as said already: these exist on the fringe, and for other nations, but there are the Sabbath[1] days, to wit, the weekdays as they exist for Israel. Now, when that point ascends, everything else is hidden away, it alone holding sway, and it assumes the name of Sabbath (*SHaBBaTH*). That name, apart from its simple meaning of "rest", has an esoteric significance associating that point with the Patriarchs. For the term *SHaBBaTH* is resolvable into the letter *shin*, betokening three,[2] and the term *BaTH*, signifying daughter, the whole indicating that the Sabbath-point, when it rises in its resplendence as an only and beloved daughter, joined to the three Patriarchs, who together with her form a complete unity. We have thus *SHin* (symbolic of the three Patriarchs), and *BaTH* (symbolic of the beloved daughter, the Sabbath-point), together forming a unity expressed in *SHabBaTH*. (There is also a higher Sabbath similarly made up of the Future World (*Binah*) and the Central Point, which is also called *bath*.) When that lower Sabbath-point

[1] i.e. Sabbath as signifying, in an extensive sense, week, but, according to the Zohar, of a sanctified nature, partaking of the sanctity of the Sabbath. [2] To wit, by the three bars in its shape.

ascends, comes into view and bedecks itself, a spirit of rejoicing is suffused through the upper and the lower worlds. In addition, during that night that point radiates its light and spreads forth its wings over the world, so that all other powers disappear and the world abides in a state of security. As for the Israelites, each one of them becomes the habitation of an additional soul, under the influence of which all sadness and gloom and irritation are forgotten, there being only joy and gladness diffused through both the upper and the lower worlds. In its descent, the additional soul bathes itself in the sweet perfumes of the Garden of Eden, after which it descends and rests upon the holy people. Happy are they when that spirit is stirred within them. At the time of the spirit's descent there accompany it into the Garden of Eden sixty Chariot teams in all their glory, facing towards the six directions. When it arrives in the Garden of Eden all the spirits and souls abiding therein bestir themselves to meet that Sabbath spirit, and a proclamation goes forth, saying: Happy are ye, O holy people of Israel, on whom your Master has bestowed [204*b*] an additional spirit. Here is a most recondite doctrine only known to the initiated of the mystical Wisdom. This spirit is indeed the extension of the Sabbath-point, from which it grows out and diffuses itself into the world. This constitutes the true inwardness of the Sabbath here below; and this is specially alluded to in the injunction: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall guard the Sabbath" (Ex. XXXI, 16), where the particle *eth* is meant to include the additional spirit that requires special attention in order that it may remain with a man. The same is indicated in the clause, "that guards the Sabbath from profaning it" (Isa. LVI, 2). Within the mystery of the special spirit there is this further mystery, to wit, that it shares in all the enjoyments and delights that Israel partakes of on that day; hence it behoves us to afford it pleasure by partaking of food and drink three times, the three meals corresponding to the three grades of Divine Faith, as explained elsewhere. Happy is the portion of whoever affords it pleasure and delight on that day. During the six days of the week that spirit experiences a heavenly bliss radiated from the Ancient

of Ancients. But on the Sabbath, after it descends and bathes itself in the Garden of Eden, it shares in the bodily pleasure derived from the meal of Faith, and is thus filled with the delights both of the superior world and the lower world. Insomuch, then, as it abides with man, it is necessary for him to guard it, conformably to the Scriptural injunction: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall guard the Sabbath" (Ex. XXXI, 16), the term "Sabbath" alluding to the terrestrial Sabbath-point, and the particle *eth* to the special spirit which is the expansion of the same Point. When that expansion brings an affluence of holiness and beatitudes from on high on to that point, there is an effulgence of light all around, and the spirit is illumined on all sides, the heavenly and the earthly. This is alluded to in the words, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel" (*Ibid.* XXXI, 17), as much as to say: "It is a portion and a heritage shared between us jointly." The heavenly part of it consists of transcendental holy bliss and sublime delight in the resplendency of the Ancient of Ancients; whilst in the terrestrial part there is the physical enjoyment of the repasts. It behoves, therefore, a man to cheer that day with sumptuous food and drink, with noble raiment, and with whatever conduces to joyfulness. And when the terrestrial portion is duly decorated and is properly tended it ascends on high and becomes merged into one with the heavenly portion; so that the "Point" becomes an amalgam of the upper and the lower worlds, and a unification of all the elements. In the mystical book of King Solomon the following recondite doctrine, as expounded by the Holy Lamp, is found. The term *vayinefash* (and He rested) (*Ibid.*) may be resolved into *vai* (woe), *nefesh* (soul), that is, woe to the soul forlorn! Now we may well argue that it should rather be woe to the body that loses the special spirit with the departure of the Sabbath. But the truth is that man possesses a certain *nefesh* (psyche) that attracts to itself the special spirit on the eve of Sabbath, so that that spirit takes up its abode and resides within it the whole of the Sabbath. It thus becomes a superior *nefesh*, with greater power and resources than it possessed before. It is in reference to this that we have learned that the

nefesh of every Israelite is decorated on the Sabbath day, that decoration consisting of the special spirit within them. But at the conclusion of the Sabbath that spirit departs, and then woe to the *nefesh* that is thus bereft. It has lost the heavenly crown and the holy energy it thereby possessed.

'Those initiated in the higher wisdom perform their marital duties on each Sabbath night. Concerning this, we put a question to the Holy Lamp, pointing out to him that it seems to contradict the known fact that the lower Crown receives what it receives[1] in the daytime, and in the night it distributes sustenance to all its host, as Scripture says: "She rises also while it is yet night, and giveth food to her household, and a portion to her maidens" (Prov. xxxi, 15). If this be so, how can we say the proper time for intercourse is on that night in particular? He replied: Assuredly, that is the proper time for marital intercourse, insomuch as that night distributes souls for those [205*a*] initiated in the mystical Wisdom, and no other time is appropriate for this junction to be performed with all joy without any extraneous admixture, save that night when the souls are distributed to the wise, the righteous, and the pious. Each night, indeed, may be proper for it, and that at midnight, as explained elsewhere, but it behoves the initiated to limit themselves to that night. The reason is that one spirit hovers over the world during the other days of the week, but on Sabbath night another spirit, a sacred and sublime spirit, descends for the holy people. That spirit flows from the Ancient of Ancients and descends into the lower "Sabbath-point", bringing therein rest for all, whence it expands into all directions on high and below, as it says: "between Me and the children of Israel". Hence, for those men of wisdom the proper time for that function is when that holy and exalted spirit is diffused around them, since that same spirit draws after it in its descent here below all the holy souls, so that by its means the exalted saints transmit to their offspring those holy souls.

'Furthermore, as soon as that spirit hovers over the world, all the malignant spirits and the evil accusers of men vanish

[1] i.e. the souls from on high.

from the world. And so there is then no need to pray for protection, as Israel is then under the guardianship of that spirit, with the wings of the tabernacle of peace spread over them, so that they may be perfectly secure. There is, it is true, a traditional teaching which says that a man should not go out alone either on the night of the fourth day of the week or on the night of the Sabbath, and that at these times one has to be on one's guard; and this seems to contradict what has just been said, that on Sabbath night men are shielded from all evil accusers and need not therefore offer up a special prayer. Still, all this is assuredly correct. The fourth night of the week we have to be on our guard against them, for the reason that at the creation of the lights the moon was cursed, its light diminished, and occasion was thus given to bands of malignant roving spirits to exercise power that night; on Sabbath night, again, whilst these spirits scatter themselves in order to retire into the cavern of the abyss where they are powerless to harm, a solitary man must be on his guard against them, since, although they are deprived of power, now and then they show themselves, and so a solitary wayfarer has to be on his guard. If that be so, it was said, does it not betoken an inadequate degree of security? Not so, it was answered. On the Sabbath there is protection for the holy people, and the Holy One, on the entrance of the Sabbath, decorates every member of Israel with a crown—a holy crown, which every wearer must cherish and guard. Now, although the malignant spirits do not then frequent inhabited places, they often appear to a man that walks alone, and then his "lucky star" (*mazzal*) deserts him. It is therefore incumbent upon a man to decorate himself with the holy crown and to guard it. Howbeit, on that night the holy people are fully protected, since the tabernacle of peace overspreads them, and tradition tells us that the tabernacle of peace and the "other side" cannot coexist together. The Sabbath day is thus a day of universal joy and security, both in the upper and the lower worlds; and the lower light, radiating into the upper world, through the resplendency of the Sabbath crowns, is there intensified seventy-fold, so that the Ancient of Ancients bestirs Himself.

Then at break of day the holy people proceed to Synagogue in a joyous spirit robed in their best, crowned with the celestial holy crown and endowed with the additional celestial spirit, and there they offer up praises in songs and hymns, which mount up on high, so that the upper and the lower worlds are filled with joy and are all decorated together. Then the celestial beings hold forth and say: "Happy are ye, O holy people on earth, through whom your Master is crowned, as well as all the sacred hosts." This day is the day of the soul and not of the body, exhibiting the sway of the "bundle of souls", when the upper and the lower beings are mated [205*b*] together in virtue of the additional celestial spirit by which man is crowned.

"The prayer offered by the holy people on the Sabbath is of three parts, corresponding to the three Sabbaths, but being in essence only one.[1] Once the holy people enter the precincts of the Synagogue it is forbidden them to concern themselves with anything, even the requirements of the Synagogue, save words of thanksgiving and prayer and the study of the Torah; and whoever directs his mind to other and worldly matters profanes the Sabbath, and thus has no portion among the people of Israel. For such a one two angels are appointed on the day of Sabbath, who proclaim, saying: "Woe to So-and-so who has no portion in the Holy One, blessed be He." Hence it behoves the people to absorb themselves in prayer and songs and hymns to their Master, and in the study of the Torah. It is a day of the souls, a day in which the "bundle of the souls" is decorated by the praises offered to their Master. Hence on that day is recited the "Hymn of the Soul", which reads: "The soul of every living being shall bless Thy name, O Lord our God, and the spirit of all flesh . . .", as that day subsists solely by the spirit and soul, and not by the body. Another hymn that concerns the mystery of day, of the sacred sun that illumines it, is ". . . who formest light . . .", to wit, the illuminating light which affords sustenance and light for all the hosts and heavenly Chariots and stars and constellations, and all those

[1] i.e. the Sabbath of the Creation, the Sabbath on which the Torah was given, and the Sabbath of the Millennium.

who exercise sway over the world. Then follows a Hymn of the universe, couched in the words, "God, the Lord over all works . . .", an alphabetical hymn which contains the mystery of the twenty-two sacred celestial letters which are decorated with a crown made of the Patriarchs and the holy heavenly Chariot. Opposite to them are the twenty-two little letters of the lower world which enter in the daily hymn that reads: "The God, the blessed One, great in knowledge . . .". Herein the alphabet ranges over single words in succession, there being no space between the words; whereas in the Sabbath hymn, symbolic of the upper world, there is a wide space, significant of holy mysteries, between the successive letters. The seventh day thus chants a most sublime hymn, composed of the celestial letters, in praise of the Most High King, of Him who formed the world at the beginning. When this hymn mounts up on high, sixty celestial Chariots of those alluded to before, take it up from the holy people and ascend with it to where it is woven into a crown for the decoration of the many heavenly Chariots, and for all the righteous in the Garden of Eden, all of whom mount up with that hymn to the Divine Throne. There this hymn, recited by the whole of Israel, halts until the recital of the Sanctification (*k'dushah*) in the additional prayer (*musaph*). Thus is effected the complete union of the upper and the lower worlds. So much for this hymn—the gem of all hymns. Then follows the regular daily order of prayer up to "Moses rejoiced in the gift of his portion. . . ." This expresses the joy of the supreme grade, the chief of the "Patriarchs", who rejoices in His portion when the Divine Throne approaches Him, and the two worlds are fused into one; again, it expresses the rejoicing of the Written Law on high in the Oral Law here below, and their fusion into one. To the joy at that union we have to add the joy of the holy people as expressed in the words: "May they rejoice in Thy kingdom, those who observe the Sabbath, and call the Sabbath a delight . . . O God and God of our fathers, accept our rest. . . ." Now, the inwardness of the interrelationship between the Book of the Law (*Sepher Torah*) and that day has been expounded elsewhere. In this regard we have been taught

as follows. It is written: "And they read in the book, in the Law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Nehemiah VIII, 8). The inner implication of this verse is that the verse-divisions, the tonal accents, the Massoretic readings, and all the minutiæ of the text with their profound mysteries, were all delivered to Moses on Sinai. It may be asked, If that is so, why are all these signs and notes, with all the mysteries they contain, absent from our most holy Scroll of Law? The explanation is as follows. When the Divine Throne was decorated and completed with the crown formed from the Written Law, all the points and tonal accents and Massoretic signs were hidden [206a] in the interior of the Divine Throne; then all these signs were the means by which the Written Law fertilized the Oral Law, as a female is fertilized from the male. But the celestial letters remained in their original sanctity unaccompanied by any signs, and hence they have to appear in this guise in the Synagogue, seeing that the Divine Throne was decorated and sanctified by the Written Law in its bare letters. The celestial holiness is thus diffused through the whole, especially on the day of Sabbath. On that day seven persons are called up to take part in the public reading of the Law, corresponding to the seven voices[1] amidst which the Torah was given; on the other festivals five persons read the Law, and on the Day of Atonement the number is six. All these regulations have a similar recondite significance. The number five corresponds to the five (divine) grades that come after the primordial Light, which are a symbol of the Law; six signifies the so-called "six directions", and seven corresponds to the seven voices: thus all have the same symbolism. On the day of New Moon a fourth is added to the three who are called up on an ordinary day, to symbolize the Sun that gives light at that time to the moon; and this is the inner significance of the additional sacrifice and the additional prayer (*musaph*) offered on that day. In the reading of the Law only one voice should be heard at a time. Both on the Sabbath and on other days when the Law

[1] *vide* Ps. XXIX, which, according to the Midrash, refers to the giving of the Law.

is publicly read the holy people must have a Throne prepared in the form of a reading-desk with an ascent of six steps and no more, conformably to the passage saying, "and there were six steps to the throne" (2 Chron. XI, 18), and having one step above on which to place the Book of the Law, that it may be seen by the whole congregation. As soon as the Book of the Law is placed thereon the whole congregation below should assume an attitude of awe and fear, of trembling and quaking, as though they were at that moment standing beneath Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, and should give ear and listen attentively; for it is not permitted then to open one's mouth, even for discussing the Torah, still less other subjects. All must be in awe and fear, as though they were speechless. So Scripture says: "And when he opened it, all the people stood up" (Neh. VIII, 5); also, "And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the Book of the Law" (*Ibid.* VIII, 3). R. Simeon said: When the Book of the Law is taken out to be read before the congregation, the mercy-gates of heaven are opened and the attribute of Love is stirred up, and each one should then recite the following prayer:

Blessed be the name of the Master of the universe, blessed be Thy crown and Thy place; may Thy favour accompany Thy people Israel for evermore, and manifest Thou to Thy people the redemption of Thy right hand in Thy Sanctuary so as to make us enjoy Thy goodly light and to accept our prayer in mercy. May it be Thy will to prolong our life in goodness, and may I, Thy servant, be counted among the righteous so that Thou have mercy upon me and guard me and all mine and all that are of Thy people Israel. Thou art He that nourisheth and sustaineth all, Thou art ruler over all, Thou art ruler over all kings, and the kingdom is Thine. I am the servant of the Holy One, blessed be He, and bow down before Him and before His glorious Torah at all times. Not in man do I put my trust, nor do I rely upon angels, but on the God of heaven, who is the God of truth and whose Torah is truth and whose prophets are true prophets: in Him do I put my trust and to His holy and glorious name do I sing praises. May it be Thy will to open my heart to Thy Law, and grant me male children, such as will do Thy will, and mayest Thou fulfil the desires of my heart and that of Thy people Israel, for whatever is good, for life, and for peace. Amen.

It is forbidden for more than one at a time to read in the Book of the Law; the rest should listen attentively and in

silence to the words coming from his mouth as though they were receiving them at that moment from Mount Sinai. Another person should stand next to the reader, but in silence, so that there should be heard one sole utterance, and not two. As the holy tongue stands alone, so its message must be delivered by one only; and for two to read simultaneously in the Book of the Law would be a lessening of Divine Faith and a lessening of the glory of the Torah. (Similarly, in reciting the translation,[1] only one voice should be heard. The translation and the reading are related as the shell and the brain.[2]) All should be silent, one only reading, just as at Sinai, as we are told, "God spoke all these words, saying" (Ex. XX, 1), He being above and all the people beneath, as we read, [206b] "and they stood at the nether part of the mount" (*Ibid.* XIX, 17). We also read, "And Moses went up unto God" (*Ibid.* XIX, 3). It behoves the reader to concentrate all his mind on the words he reads, and to realize that he is the messenger of his Master, charged with the duty of communicating these words to the whole congregation, he being in the place of heaven to them. Hence, whoever would go up to read in the Torah should previously rehearse his reading at home, or else not read at all. This we learn from the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, of which we read, first, "Then did he see it and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out" (Job. XXVIII, 27), and then, "And unto man he said: Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom" (*Ibid.* XXVIII, 28). It is forbidden to the reader to break off anywhere save where Moses indicated a pause. Neither may he in reading the portion of one week add part of the portion of another week. The inner reason of this is as follows. Each weekly lesson is at its conclusion adorned with a crown, and presents itself before God. At the conclusion of their yearly cycle they all present themselves, thus crowned, before the Holy One, blessed be He, each one announcing: I belong to the Sabbath so-and-so, and to congregation so-and-so. At that moment the angel Youfiel, the great chief, is called for, who presents

[1] It was formerly the custom that after each verse of the original the Aramaic translation (*Targum*) should be recited. [2] Al. as this world and the next world.

himself accompanied by the fifty-three[1] legions under his charge. These legions superintend the reading of the Law, each one having to preside over the reading on a particular Sabbath assigned to it. It is thus forbidden us to disarrange the Lessons and thereby cause the overlapping of one legion with another, even by so much as a hairbreadth, by so much as a single word or even a single letter; but each must be kept within its own limits as fixed by the Holy One, blessed be He. All the legions thus present themselves, each one standing guard over the weekly Lesson under its charge. Each portion thus decorated with a crown, after its reading has been completed by the congregation, is taken up by its superintending legion and brought before the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, in all its several words. These words declare: "We are such-and-such a section, completed by such-and-such a congregation in such-and-such manner." If the reading of them has been completed in the proper manner, the words ascend and themselves are woven into a crown to adorn the Divine Throne, with its superintending legion standing guard over it. The same is repeated with each separate Sabbath lesson in turn until they are all joined and become interwoven into one single crown. Hence, happy is the portion of whoever completes the reading of the weekly portion of each and every Sabbath in the proper manner, and in accordance with the divisions fixed on high.

'On Sabbath we have to read in the Book of the Law twice: once in the morning and a second time at dusk. For the late afternoon is the time when judgement hangs over the world, hence it is necessary for us to intertwine the Left with the Right,[2] seeing that the Torah proceeded from the two sides, as it is written: "At his right hand was a fiery law unto them" (Deut. XXXIII, 2), implying both the right and the left. Hence the reading of the Law at dusk should comprise ten verses or more, but not the entire portion, as the complete portion is of the right, and the right prevails only until

[1] The traditional division of the Pentateuch is into fifty-four sections. Some say that the sections *Nizabim* and *Vayelekh* are, by the Zohar, counted as one; others, that *V'zoth Habbrakhah* is here excluded, as not belonging to any Sabbath. [2] i.e. Rigour with Clemency.

the time of afternoon service. We have also to read the Law on the second and the fifth days of the week, as on these days the higher grades descend below, those grades that represent the main principles of the Torah. The esoteric significance of the matter is this. These superior grades represent one portion of the Torah, but from them there emanate nine grades,[1] which form a unity, and hence have their counterpart in the nine persons called to read the Law: to wit, three on Sabbath at *Minḥa*, and three each on the second and the fifth days of the week. Similarly we read in the Book of R. Yeba the Venerable: "At *Minḥa*-time on Sabbath there is an awakening of the mysterious forces of the Left, and the lower 'Sabbath-Point' within that left side receives the mystery of the Torah. At that moment, therefore, it receives from the domination, as it were, of the left side, the side which is esoterically represented [207*a*] by nine, and hence the nine persons who read the Law, to wit, six on weekdays and three on Sabbath at the moment when the left side bestirs itself." Happy is the portion of whoever is privileged to do honour to the Sabbath; happy is he in the two worlds, in this world and in the future world.

'It is written: "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (Ex. XVI, 29). We have learned that the term "place" signifies the space wherein it is fitting for a man to walk; and esoterically it is the counterpart of the similar term in "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. III, 12); also in "for the place whereon thou standest", etc. (Ex. III, 5); it is a place well known on high, and we call it the place wherein is revealed the most high glory in heaven; and hence the warning to the man who is adorned with the holy heavenly crown not to "go out of his place on the seventh day", that is, not to speak of workaday matters, as that would be a profanation of the Sabbath, nor to do work with his hands, nor to walk beyond the limit of two thousand cubits. "Let no man go out of his place", to wit, the place of Holy Majesty, as beyond it is the place of strange gods. "Blessed be the glory of the Lord", to wit, His glory in the high heavens; "from His place", to wit,

[1] The grades of *Nezah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, each with its three sections.

His glory in the lower world, the two together forming the Sabbath-crown. Hence, "let no one go out of his place". Blessed be He for ever and to all eternity. It is written: "Behold, there is a place by me" (Ex. XXXIII, 21), a place, that is, concealed and hidden, eluding all inquiry, the place which is in the height of heights, the most high Temple, withdrawn from all cognition. But over against it is the lower place, referred to above. Thus there is "place" above and "place" below, and hence "let no man go out of his place on the seventh day". It is written: "And ye shall measure without the city for the east side two thousand cubits," etc. (Num. XXXV, 5). This verse contains sublime mysteries, indicated already elsewhere. It speaks of a higher and a lower region, the two thousand cubits extending on all sides. So the Shekinah does not hover anywhere outside the boundaries assigned to her.

'When the Sabbath begins to draw to a close Israel must draw it out as long as possible, for it is a great and exalted day, and the Shekinah, moreover, is our guest on that day, and so we must make every effort to detain the celestial guest as long as possible. Then, at the conclusion of the Sabbath, we commence prayers by reciting: "And He being merciful, forgiveth iniquity. . . ." This verse is very appropriate for that night, because then Rigour resumes it sway, whereas it is not appropriate for reciting at the entrance of the Sabbath, since that Rigour is then completely withdrawn from the world. Then, when the congregation recite the passage beginning, "And let the pleasantness...", succeeding Sanctification, all the sinners in Gehinnom exclaim: "Happy are ye, O Israel! Happy are ye righteous men who observe the commands of the Torah! Alas for the wicked who did not succeed in observing the precepts of the Torah." Then appears Dumah,[1] and proclaims: "Let the wicked return to the nether-world, even all the nations that forget God" (*Ibid.* IX, 18). The wicked are then driven back by all the bands of demons into Gehinnom without anyone having compassion on them. Happy are those who observe the Sabbath in this world, and so enjoy the celestial delight

[1] The chief of the under world.

vouchsafed to them from above, as already mentioned. On the other hand, he who keeps the Sabbath as a day of fasting provokes against himself two accusers who indict him before the Holy King. One is the holy Sabbatical super-spirit who is deprived of his due share of Sabbath-day delight; and the other is the angel named Sangariah, who has charge over those who observe a fast. These two accuse the man before the Holy King. For, since the lower spirit is deprived of its proper share of Sabbath delight, it is in a state of imperfection and therefore the corresponding spirit above is also in a state of imperfection, and the man thus deserves curses and punishments. If, however, he makes good on other occasions, so that the angel of [207*b*] fasts finds satisfaction in the celestial bliss which he enjoys in the company of other guardian angels, his punishment is remitted. Suppose a king in the midst of his marriage festivities, in which all his subjects are invited to participate, notices a man being led in chains to the place of punishment. Straightway he gives orders for the man to be released, so that all, without exception, may share in his rejoicings. Afterwards, the officers return and lead the man to the place of punishment. Similarly, the celestial officers come in due course and exact punishment of the man who caused a diminution of joy both in heaven and on earth by fasting on Sabbath. What, then, is his remedy? That he observe another fast to atone for his Sabbath fast; as he did away with the joy of Sabbath, so let him do away with the pleasure of weekdays. But if he banishes joy on Sabbath and indulges in it on weekdays, by fasting on the Sabbath and feasting on the following weekday, he will show that he thinks more of this world than of God, since he neglects the holy super-spirit of the Sabbath, and entertains the weekday spirit, which rests on the world afterwards. It is therefore incumbent on him to observe a fast on the first day of the week, the time when the ordinary weekday spirit resumes its sway, so that he may obtain healing by disregarding the everyday spirit. Happy is he who on earth rises to that sublime heavenly delight in the manner due. For this day is adorned with seventy crowns, and the Divine Name is perfected in all sides, and all the

grades are illumined, and all is pervaded with joy, with blessing, and with an overflowing measure of holiness.

'The Sanctification (*Kiddush*), recited on the eve of the Sabbath, ushers in a holiness equal to that of the Sabbath of Creation, which was hallowed by the "thirty-two Paths of Wisdom" and "three holy apple-trees".[1] Hence, in the Sanctification ceremony we have to recite the passage: "And the heaven and the earth were finished . . . which God in creating had made" (Gen. II, 1–3), which contains an essential testimony to the work of creation. For this passage contains thirty-five words representing the "thirty-two Paths" and the three "holy apple-trees", which are represented by the three occurrences of the word "seventh" in the passage. This section also contains allusions to the upper world, the lower world, and the Divine Faith in all its compass. The word "Elohim" is mentioned three times, pointing to the lower world, the "Fear of Isaac" (Rigour), and the highest world, which is the Holy of Holies. Now, it behoves man to give testimony to this before his Master, gladly, joyfully, and with all his heart and mind. Thereby all our sins are atoned for.

'Next we recite the benediction, which runs: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us by thy commandments and hast taken pleasure in us. . . ." This part of the recital balances the other part, called the testimony to Divine Faith, and so it also contains thirty-five words. Together we thus have seventy words, which are so many crowns by which the Eve of the Sabbath is adorned. Happy is the man who in his recital meditates over all this to the glory of his Master. The Sanctification (*Kiddush*) recital in the morning consists of the blessing over the cup of wine, to wit, ". . . who createst the fruit of the vine", and no more. The reason of this is that then it is the day that sanctifies itself, whereas the Eve has to be sanctified by us with all the recital just mentioned. The Eve is only consecrated by the holy people on earth what time the super-soul descends on them; we thus have to sanctify it with special concentration of our thought on this. Contrariwise,

[1] The three highest grades.

the day makes itself holy, and Israel, being hallowed through prayers and supplications, sanctify themselves still further through the holiness of the day. Happy are the holy people of Israel who have inherited this day as an everlasting heritage.

'At the conclusion of the Sabbath we have to make "separation" between holy and profane, for the reason that at the moment the inferior spirits resume their sway over the world and all its doings; and so we have to demonstrate the existence of the Holy One in His holy place wrapt in holiness absolute, and to distinguish between the lower elements and most exalted Unity. [208*a*] To do this, we recite a blessing over the light of fire. For, although all other fires are put out and hidden on the Sabbath, one fire still shows itself on this day, being included in the holiness of Sabbath; when this comes forth, all the other fires hide themselves. It is the fire of the altar upon which Isaac was to have been offered as a sacrifice. We have to say the blessing over the fire that burnt on the Sabbath, which is the fire that emanated from the celestial fire, the fire that carries fire; and when this is blessed, all other fires come forth and are assigned to their places. When we say the blessing over that fire, four legions of angels, called "lights of the fire", come down to be illuminated by this blessed fire. Therefore do we bend the four fingers of our right hand to catch the light of the lamp that is blessed, symbolic of the four legions, called "lights of the fire", who themselves are illumined by, and derive power from, a certain supernal Lamp. Those legions, moreover, are of the lower grades, and we bend thus our fingers before the light to show its supremacy. Contrariwise, in the recital of other blessings we have to raise our fingers, to show the supremacy of the supernal holy grades which rule over all, the Divine Name being by them crowned and sanctified, and which are illumined by the Supreme Lamp. But here we incline our fingers downwards against the light as a symbol of the lower grades which are illumined by the light of blessing, and so are called "Lights of the Fire". On all other days we praise the Almighty for having made the luminaries of "light" (*or*), in allusion to the supreme radiations of the primordial light which shed blessings

and light over all grades together; whereas here we only mention the "lights of the fire" (*esh*). Now, inasmuch as these "lights of the fire" emanate from the fire over which the benediction was recited, why, one may ask, not say "lightest" instead of "greatest"? The explanation is that at the entrance of the Sabbath all the lower grades and luminaries and potencies are absorbed by the Supreme Lamp and become invisible save for the one single point; and they remain in it the whole of the Sabbath day. Then, at the conclusion of the Sabbath the Almighty makes them appear one by one, as if created anew, in the same manner as at the first creation, and assigns each one to its place of domination. In the same manner, the supernal grades, called "luminaries of light", rule over the day and receive their light from the Supreme Lamp. When night falls, the Supreme Lamp gathers them up and absorbs them within itself until daybreak. As soon as Israel recites the blessing over the light of day the Supreme Lamp sends them forth fully radiant. We then thus bless the Lord "who formest (*yoṣer*) the luminaries", but not "greatest" (*bore*). It is only at the conclusion of the Sabbath that we say "who greatest the lights of the fire" in allusion to the lower grades. But both the upper and the lower grades are symbolized by our fingers. The finger-nails are of great importance in this symbolism. They are on the back of the fingers, and thus symbolize the Hinder Countenance, which needs to be illumined from that Lamp: it is called [208*b*] "the back". Whereas the inner and nail-less side of the fingers symbolizes the Inner Countenance which is hidden. This symbolical action is based on the verse, "and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen" (Ex. XXXIII, 23). "My back" is represented by the outer and nail-part of the fingers which, when we say the blessing over the light, must be placed so as to catch that light; "but My face shall not be seen", and hence the inner side of the fingers symbolizing the Inner Countenance, need not face the light to be illumined by it, as their illumination emanates from no other source but the Supernal Lamp in the height of heights, which is utterly concealed and undisclosed. The outer and nail parts of the fingers must therefore be shown

to the light, but the inner parts not. They are hidden and illumined from the hidden; innermost and illumined from the innermost; exalted and illumined from the highest. Happy is Israel in this world and in the world to come.

'It behoves us at the conclusion of the Sabbath to inhale the sweet odour of aromatic spices in order to fortify ourselves against the departure of the super-spirit, as by this departure a man's own soul is left forlorn and naked, as it were. In this regard it is written, "and he smelled the smell of his raiment" (Gen. XXVII, 27). This passage has already been expounded in a way. But observe further that the sweet smell provides sustenance for the soul, it being a substance which enters the soul but is too tenuous for absorption by the body. Now, the raiment here mentioned has been expounded as alluding to the garments of Adam the first man, those in which the Holy One arrayed him when He placed him in the Garden of Eden. When Adam sinned, however, he was stripped of these precious garments and was clothed in others instead. The original garments with which Adam was arrayed in the Garden of Eden were of the same kind as those in which the legions, called "hind-parts" (*aḥorayim*), are arrayed, and bear the name of "nail-raiment". And so long as Adam remained in the Garden of Eden all those legions encompassed and guarded him so that no evil could come near him. But after he sinned he was stripped of those garments and clothed in profane garments, made out of vicious stuff and evil spirits, and the holy legions departed from him; and there was only left on him of the original covering the finger-nails. These, however, have also an outer edge of impurity. For this reason we should not allow those nails with their impurity to grow; for as they keep growing so do the man's accusers multiply, and so does he himself sink every day into deeper melancholy. It behoves us, then, to cut them off, nor must we throw the cuttings away in a place where people pass, lest harm come to them. Now, all this is on the celestial pattern; for there also the "hinder" region is surrounded by the "other side". Later on, the Holy One made for Adam other garments out of the leaves of the terrestrial Garden of Eden. Now, those original garments,

which were an emanation of the celestial Garden of Eden, emitted the sweet fragrances and aromas of the kind which calm and soothe the soul and make it happy. Isaac thus "smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him", as that fragrance calmed and soothed his soul and spirit. Hence, at the conclusion of the Sabbath we have to inhale the odour of sweet spices in order to restore our soul and counteract the effect of the loss of the superior spirit that has left it. The best odour for this purpose is that of the myrtle, as it is myrtle which sustains the holy place from which souls issue, and so in this world it is potent to uphold man's soul at the moment when it is deprived of its higher soul-companion. It was at the conclusion of the Sabbath that Adam was clothed in the garments of the terrestrial Paradise, the sweet odours and fragrance of which sustained his soul in the loss it suffered through the departure of the superior and glorified holy spirit. The myrtle thus assuredly sustains man's soul on earth as it does the souls on high—that superior spirit that descends into man on the Sabbath and fills his soul with joy. Thus this soul is raised to the state in which it will be in the future world, [209a] for in the same measure as a man feasts and delights that spirit in this world will that spirit cause delight to the man in the future world. So Scripture says. "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord", etc. (Isa. LVIII, 14), also, "and the Lord will . . . satisfy thy soul with brightness" (*Ibid.* 14). Whoever thus fully honours the Sabbath in the manner described, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to him: "Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (*Ibid.* XLIX, 3).'

R. Isaac now ceased, and R. Abba and the other Companions rose up and kissed him on his head. They all wept and said: 'Happy is our portion in that the Holy One, blessed be He, has led our feet on this path.' Said R. Abba: 'The Lord led me on this way so that I might join your company. Happy is my portion in having been thus privileged.' R. Abba further said to them: 'Let me relate to you what I saw. When I set out on my journey to-day I saw a light ahead of me which split into three separate lights. They all went in front of me and then disappeared. I said to myself:

Assuredly, what I saw was the Shekinah. Happy is my portion. Now I know that those lights I saw were yourselves. Verily, you are the supernal lights and lamps to lighten this world and the world to come.' R. Abba continued, saying: 'Until now I did not know that all these hidden pearls were in your possession. And now that I see that all these words of yours have been uttered by the will and command of your Master, I know that they are all ascending this day to the Divine Throne, and that the Chief of the angels[1] is taking them up and weaving them into crowns for his Master, and this very day sixty holy legions are adorned with crowns, made of the words uttered here this day, to the glory of the Divine Throne,' At this point he raised his eyes and noticed that the sun had gone down. 'Let us proceed to that village yonder,' he said, 'as it is the nearest to us in this desert.' So they went there and stayed there overnight. At midnight R. Abba, with the other Companions, arose in order to study the Torah. Said R. Abba: 'Now let us weave discourses which will be made into crowns for the righteous in Paradise, as now is the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, and all the righteous in Paradise, listen to the voices of the righteous on earth.'

R. Abba then began to discourse on the verse: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. CXV, 16). 'This verse', he said, 'contains a difficulty. For would it not have sufficed to say "the heavens are of the Lord" ? Why, then, repeat the word "heavens", and say "the heavens are the heavens", etc. ? But we account for it in this way. There are heavens and heavens; to wit, lower heavens with an earth beneath them, and upper heavens also having an earth beneath them. They constitute upper grades and lower grades, the two being counterparts of each other. The lower heavens are identical with the ten curtains, to which allusion is made in the words: "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain" (Ps. CIV, 2). The Holy One made them, with the legions that people them, to regulate the affairs of the lower earth. The ninth heaven propels all the lower heavens, which are harnessed

[1] Metatron.

to it, as it were, by a chain of links. (The tenth, however, is the chief of them all.) In each heaven are controlling angels, as far as the seventh; the rest are all illumined by the light that radiates from the Divine Throne, reaching the tenth heaven, whence it is extended towards the ninth and further to the eighth, whence it reaches those below. It is the light of the eighth which gives to each of the stars, when they are brought out to their places, its requisite light and force. In regard to this it is written: "He that bringeth out their host by number . . . by the greatness of might" (Isa. XL, 26), the term "greatness of might" referring to the supernal resplendency. Furthermore, there is in each heaven a chieftain who is in charge of a part of the world and a part of the earth, except the Land of Israel, which is not under the rule of any heaven or any other power but that of the Holy One, blessed be He, alone. But, it may be said, how can the sky over the Land of Israel be without effect, seeing that the Land of Israel receives rain and dew from heaven like any other land ? The explanation is as follows. In the case of other lands, [209b] the ruler in each heaven transmits of his power to the earth below through the medium of the heaven under his charge—of that power which he himself has received from the residue left of the supernal source. But the heaven which is over the Holy Land is not ruled by any chieftain or any other power, but is in the sole charge of the Holy One, blessed be He, who Himself directs the affairs of that land from that heaven. Each heaven is provided with a certain number of portals, and the charge of each chieftain extends from one portal to the next, and he may not encroach on the sphere of his fellow-chieftain by even so much as a hairbreadth, except he receive authorization to exercise dominion over his neighbour; when this happens one king on earth obtains power over another. There is, besides, in the centre of the whole of the heavens, a door called *G'bilon;* underneath that door are seventy other doors, with seventy chieftains keeping guard, at a distance from it of two thousand cubits, so that no one should come near it. From that door, again, there is a path mounting higher and ever higher until it reaches the Divine Throne. The same door gives access to all quarters

of heaven as far as the gate called *Magdon*,[1] where is the end of the heaven that extends over the Land of Israel. All the seventy doors that are inscribed on the door called *G'bilan*, are called "gates of righteousness", being under the direct control of the Divine Throne, and no other power; and it is through those gates that the Holy One provides the Land of Israel with all that it needs; and it is from the residue of that provision that the Chieftains take and transmit to all the lower chieftains.

'In connection with the firmament that is above the lower Paradise there are sublime mysteries. When the Holy One was about to make the firmament, He took fire and water out of His Throne of Glory, fused them into one, and out of them made the lower firmament, which expanded until it reached the area of the Lower Paradise, where it halted. The Holy One, blessed be He, then took from the holy and supernal heaven fire and water of another kind, such as both are and are not, are both disclosed and undisIcosed, and of them He made a further expanse of heaven which He spread over the lower Paradise where it joins the other firmament. That expanse of heaven, above the lower Paradise, displays four colours: white, red, green, and black, and correspondingly contains four doors in its four sides. These four openings form a passage for four light-radiations. On the right side two lights shine forth through two doors, one through the door of the right and one through the opposite. Within the light-radiation on the right a certain letter stands out with scintillating effulgence, to wit, the letter *Mim*. That letter moves up and down continually without ever resting at one point. Within the opposite light-radiation there similarly stands out with a scintillating effulgence the letter *Resh*, which on occasions, however, assumes the shape of the letter *Beth*. This similarly moves for ever up and down, at times being revealed and at other times hidden. When the soul of a righteous man enters the Lower Paradise, these two letters emerge out of the midst of that radiation, and appear above that soul, where they continue to rise and fall. Then out of the same two doors there emerge from on high two legions,

[1] Al. Mandon.

one under the charge of Michael the great prince, and the second under the great chieftain called Bael, who is the noble minister [210a] called Raphael. These legions descend and pause above the soul, which they greet with the words: "Peace be thy coming, he entereth into peace, he entereth into peace!" The two letters then return to their place and become absorbed within the radiation that passes through those two doors. Similarly, through the other two doors, that on the left and on the west, there pass two light-radiations, out of which there project two other flaming and scintillating letters, to wit, a *Gimel* and a *Nun;* and when the two previous letters return to their own place these two flaming letters emerge from the midst of their surrounding illumination and appear above that soul. Then, again, emerging out of the other two portals, there come forth two other legions, one under the charge of the great chief Gabriel, and the other under that of the great chief Nuriel. These fix themselves above the soul whilst the letters return to their place. After that these two legions enter into a certain hidden Palace in the Garden, called *Ahaloth* (lit. aloes). Therein is the hidden store of the twelve varieties of sweet spices which Scripture enumerates, "Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon . . ." (S.S. IV, 14), these being the twelve varieties of spices of the Lower Paradise. Therein is also the repository of all the garments wherewith men's souls are invested, each according to its desert. On each garment all the good works that a man did in this world are inscribed, and in each case proclamation is made, saying: "This garment belongs to such a one"; after which the soul of the righteous in Paradise is clothed therewith, so as to become a replica of the man's personality whilst in this world. This takes place not less than thirty days after the man's death, inasmuch as for the first thirty days there is no soul but must undergo correction before entering Paradise, as already stated elsewhere. After purification it receives its garment, in virtue of which it is then assigned to its appropriate place. All the letters and legions then disappear. Now, the firmament over the Lower Paradise revolves twice a day under the impetus of the other firmament that is attached to it. That firmament,

moreover, is inwrought with all the letters of the alphabet in various colours, each letter distilling of the heavenly dew over the Garden. It is in that dew that the souls bathe and recuperate after their previous immersion in the *Nehar dinur* (river of fire) for purification. That dew descends from no other source but from the midst of the letters that are graven in that firmament, these letters containing in miniature the whole of the Torah, and that firmament forming the esoteric aspect of the Torah, since it is made out of the fire and water of the Torah itself. Hence they drop their dew upon all those who in this world give themselves up to the study of the Torah for its own sake. The very words of their studies are inscribed in Paradise, whence they mount up to that firmament where they receive from those letters that dew on which the soul of the good man is nurtured. So Scripture says: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew" (Deut. XXXII, 2). In the centre of that firmament there is an opening directly facing the opening of the supernal Palace on high and forming the gateway through which the souls soar up from the Lower Paradise unto the Higher Paradise by way of a pillar that is fixed in the Lower Paradise reaching up to the door on high. There is, moreover, a column of light, formed of a combination of three lights of so many different colours, radiating upwards from the opening in the centre of that firmament, and thus illuminating that pillar with a many-hued light. Thus that firmament scintillates and flashes with a number of dazzling colours. The righteous are illumined by the reflection of that supernal resplendency, and on each New Moon the glory of the Shekinah as revealed in that firmament transcends that of other times. All the righteous then approach and prostrate themselves before it. Happy is the portion of whoever is found worthy of those garments wherein the righteous are clad in the Garden of Eden. Those garments are made out of the good deeds performed by [210*b*] a man in this world in obedience to the commands of the Torah. In the Lower Paradise man's soul is thus sustained by these deeds and is clad in garments of glory made out of them. But when the soul mounts up on high through that

portal of the firmament, other precious garments are provided for it of a more exalted order, made out of the zeal and devotion which characterized his study of the Torah and his prayer; for when that zeal mounts up on high a crown is made out of it for him to be crowned with, but some of it remains as the man's portion, out of which garments of light are made for the soul to be clad in when it has ascended on high. The former garments, as we have said, depend on his actions, but these depend on his devotion of spirit, so as to qualify their owner to join the company of holy angels and spirits. This is the correct exposition of the matter as the Holy Lamp learned it from Elijah. The garments of the Lower Paradise are made of man's actions; those of the celestial Paradise of the devotion and earnestness of his spirit.

'It is written: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden", etc. (Gen. II, 10). It is of importance to know the source and origin of the river that went out of Eden into the Lower Garden. Eden itself is most recondite, and no eye is permitted to discern it. The inner reason is that had the Lower Eden been allowed to be disclosed, the position of the Higher Eden also would have become discoverable. In order, therefore, that the Higher Eden should remain enveloped in holy mystery, the Lower Eden, from which a river went out, had also to be entirely hidden, and so it is undisclosed, even to the souls in the Garden of Eden itself. Now, as that river flows out of Eden to water the Garden, so from the portal in the centre of the Garden emerges a stream of light that divides into four sections, radiating in four directions, passing the four portals previously mentioned, and illuminating the inscribed letters. That fourfold beam issues from Eden, at the Lower Point that shines opposite the Celestial Point. That point is illumined, and is itself transmuted into Eden, the fount of the light. That Point itself is not given to any to see or know, but only the light radiating from it, before which the righteous in the Garden of Eden prostrate themselves, as already said. That Lower Point is in its turn Garden in relation to the Celestial Eden, a spot not given to any to know or to perceive. Concerning all this it is written: "No eye hath seen beside thee, O God" (Isa. LXIV, 3), which

is an allusion to the holy Lower Point that alone has knowledge of the Lower Eden which is hidden in the Garden, there being none other that has knowledge of it. Again, "beside thee, O Elohim," alludes to the Higher Eden, which is identical with the mystery of the world to come, with the principle that knows the Lower Point, none other knowing it save Elohim, the One who ascends ever higher into the Boundless (*En-soph*).

'The river that goes forth out of the Lower Eden is a mystery only known to the initiated, and is alluded to in the words: "and he will satisfy thy soul in dry places (*ẓaḥẓaḥoth*, al. with brightness)" (Isa. LVIII, 11). The soul that quits this dark world pants for the light of the upper world. Just as the thirsty man pants for water, so does the soul thirst for the brilliancy of the light of the Garden and the firmament. The souls sit there by that river that flows out of Eden; they find rest there whilst clad in the ethereal garments. Without those garments they would not be able to endure the dazzling light around them; but protected by this covering they are in comfort and drink their fill of that radiance without being overwhelmed by it. It is the river which renders the souls fit and able to feast on and to enjoy that radiance. The celestial river brings forth the souls who fly off into the Garden; the lower river in the terrestrial Garden, on the other hand, builds up the souls and makes them fit and able to enjoy those [211a] radiances, and so to mount up to the celestial Paradise through the central opening of the firmament and by the pillar that stands in the centre of the Lower Paradise. That pillar is enveloped in cloud and smoke and bright flashes, the cloud and smoke encircling it from the outside in order to screen those mounting up into the Upper Paradise that they should not be seen by those remaining below. Herein is involved a most recondite doctrine. When the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to adorn the "Supreme Point" with Sabbaths and festivals and ceremonial days, He sent the Eagle with the four faces who fixed himself on the Temple called "Freedom" (*d'ror*). So in the Jubilee year we have to proclaim freedom, as we read, "and ye shall proclaim freedom (*d'ror*)" (Lev. XXV, 10).

These four faces emit a sound inaudible to any save those souls that are worthy to ascend into the upper Paradise. These foregather there and are taken up by the four-faced eagle and made to mount by way of the central pillar. At that moment the other pillar goes up, the pillar of cloud and fire and smoke, with shining light in the interior (*v.* Isa. IV, 5). As soon as the souls arrive at the gate of the firmament the latter revolves three times round the Garden of Eden, producing thereby such sweet music that all the souls come forth and listen and behold the rising of the pillar of fire and cloud and smoke and shining brightness, before which they all prostrate themselves. After this the souls ascend through that portal until they enter within the Supreme Point, where they see wonderful sights, and in their ecstasy flit up and down, approaching each other and again retreating. The Supreme Point, on its side, yearns for them and adorns itself with radiance. Then one Righteous on high puts on garments of jealousy, as it were, surveys the effulgence and the gracefulness of the Supreme Point and its adornment, seizes it, raises it to Himself, so that radiance joins radiance and both become one. At that moment all the hosts of heaven break forth in chorus, saying: "Happy are ye, O righteous, who observe the Torah; happy are they who are assiduous in the study of the Torah, inasmuch as the joy of your Master is in you and the crown of your Master is fashioned by you." Now, after effulgence and effulgence have joined into one, a radiation of manifold hues descends to have converse with the souls of the righteous, and weaves them into a crown for the Divine Throne. Concerning this, then, Scripture says: "No eye beside thee hath seen what Elohim doth for those who wait for him" (Isa. LXIV, 3).'

R. Simeon said: 'It is written, "And over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible ice, stretched forth over their heads above" (Ezek. I, 22). This verse has already been expounded in a way. But there is a firmament and a firmament. There is a lower firmament that rests upon the four lower Holy Beasts, whence it extends and begins to take on the form of a female figure behind a male figure: this is

esoterically implied in the passage, saying, "and thou shalt see my back, but my face shall not be seen" (Ex. XXXIII, 23), also in "Thou hast formed me aft and fore" (Ps. CXXXIX, 5), and again in the words, "and he took one of his ribs" (Gen. II, 21); and there is an upper firmament resting on the four upper Holy Beasts, whence it extends and takes on the figure of a male, very recondite. Of these two firmaments one is named "end of heaven", and the other, "from the end of heaven" (Deut. IV, 32). "The heads of the living creatures" refers to the four lower Holy Beasts who are inscribed above the four letters that are graven on the inner side of the four portals of the Garden of Eden. Now, although we said that the Lower Eden is on earth, and it is indeed so, nevertheless the subject is a most recondite one, [211*b*] the fact being that the Supreme Point mentioned above has its part in the lower world as well as in the upper world, the Lower Garden being the portion of that Point through which it communes joyfully with the souls of the righteous on earth, and thus is filled both with celestial and terrestrial delight, communing above with the Righteous One and below with the product of the Righteous One (the souls of the righteous). The Garden is an emanation of the Point called Eden. "The heads of the living creatures", every one having four faces, that of a lion, an ox, an eagle, and that of a man, the latter embracing them all—as it says: "And the likeness of their faces was that of a man" (Ezek. I, 10)—are identical with the four "heads of the rivers" (Gen. II, 10); and it is they who support the Divine Throne; and out of the weight of that burden they ooze perspiration; and out of that perspiration there was formed the River of Fire (*nehar dinur*), of which it is written "a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him" (Dan. VII, 10). The souls of men before ascending into Paradise are immersed in that "river of fire", where they are purged without being consumed. It is with the soul as with a garment made of the skin of a salamander.[1] Such a garment, by reason of its having its origin in fire, can only be cleansed

[1] A reptile believed to be engendered in fire, so that its skin was fireproof.

in fire, fire alone having the power to purge it of its impurities. For the soul indeed originated in fire, being an emanation from the Divine Throne, of which it is written, "his throne was fiery flames" (*Ibid.* VII, 9). So, in order to be purged of its impurities it has to pass through fire. Thus fire alone has the virtue of consuming every pollution in the soul, and making it emerge pure and white. Yet let it not be thought from this that the soul undergoes no penance. For, indeed, woe to the soul that has to endure a strange fire, although it thereby be purged and made white; and still more, woe to the soul which is greatly defiled, for that soul will have to pass twice through the fire in order to come out pure and white. At first the soul is taken to a spot called Ben-hinnom, so called because it is in the interior of Gehinnom, where souls are cleansed and purified before they enter the Lower Paradise. Two angel messengers stand at the gate of Paradise and call aloud to the chieftains who have charge of that spot in Gehinnom, summoning them to receive that soul, and during the whole process of purification they continue to utter aloud repeatedly the word "*Hinnom*". When the process is completed, the chieftains take the soul out of Gehinnom and lead it to the gate of Paradise, and say to the angel messengers standing there: "*Hinnom* (lit. here they are), behold, here is the soul that has come out pure and white." The soul is then brought into Paradise. Oh, how broken is that soul after her ordeal in the infernal fire! For, although it has descended from on high, yet when it reaches the earth below it is less rarefied, and it causes the soul intense suffering and leaves it enfeebled and broken. God then causes the rays of the sun to penetrate through the four openings of the firmament above Paradise and to shed its rays on that soul and heal it. Of this Scripture says: "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings" (Malachi III, 29). A second ordeal has to be undergone by the soul on its passage from Lower Paradise to Upper Paradise; for whilst in Lower Paradise it is not yet entirely purged of the materialities of this world, so as to be fit to ascend on high. They thus pass it through that "river of fire" from which it emerges

completely purified and so comes before the presence of the Sovereign of the universe beatified[1] in every aspect. Also the rays of the celestial light afford it healing. This is its final stage. At that stage the souls stand garbed in their raiment and adorned in their crowns before their Master. Happy is the portion [212a] of the righteous in this world and in the world to come.

"The souls in Lower Paradise, on every New Moon and Sabbath day, go about and ascend to the spot called "Walls of Jerusalem", where there are a great many chieftains and legions mounting guard, as written: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem" (Isa. LXII, 6). They mount up as far as that spot, but do not enter it until their purging is complete. There they prostrate themselves, drink in ecstatically of the celestial radiance, and then return into Paradise. They also at times go forth, roaming about the world and viewing the bodies of the sinners undergoing their punishment. So Scripture says: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (*Ibid.* LXVI, 24). They continue to roam about, casting their glance on those who are victims of pain and disease, who suffer for their belief in the unity of their Master. They then return and make all this known to the Messiah. When the Messiah hears of the great suffering of Israel in their dispersion, and of the wicked amongst them who seek not to know their Master, he weeps aloud on account of those wicked ones amongst them, as it is written: "But he was wounded because of our transgression, he was crushed because of our iniquities" (*Ibid.* LIII, 5). The souls then return to their place. The Messiah, on his part, enters a certain Hall in the Garden of Eden, called the Hall of the Afflicted. There he calls for all the diseases and pains and sufferings of Israel, bidding them settle on himself, which they do. And were it not that he thus eases the burden from Israel, taking it on himself, no one could endure the sufferings meted out to Israel in expiation on account of their neglect of the Torah.

[1] Al. purified.

So Scripture says; "Surely our diseases he did bear", etc. (*Ibid.* LIII, 4). A similar function was performed by R. Eleazar here on earth. For, indeed, beyond number are the chastisements awaiting every man daily for the neglect of the Torah, all of which descended into the world at the time when the Torah was given. As long as Israel were in the Holy Land, by means of the Temple service and sacrifices they averted all evil diseases and afflictions from the world. Now it is the Messiah who is the means of averting them from mankind until the time when a man quits this world and receives his punishment, as already said. When a man's sins are so numerous that he has to pass through the nethermost compartments of Gehinnom in order to receive heavier punishment corresponding to the contamination of his soul, a more intense fire is kindled in order to consume that contamination. The destroying angels make use for this purpose of fiery rods, so as to expel that contamination. Woe to the soul that is subjected to such punishment! Happy are those who guard the precepts of the Torah!

'As already said, the Supreme Holy Point desires to hold converse with the spirits of the righteous, both on high and here below. It is at midnight that it descends below to converse with the spirits of the righteous and to fondle them as a mother fondles her children.

'The firmament overspreading the Garden of Eden is supported by the heads of the four Holy Beasts, who are symbolized by the four letters referred to above. There is, besides, a lower firmament on the pattern of the upper firmament. This firmament is embroidered with all divine colours, and it possesses four portals marked respectively by four scintillating letters. One portal is to the east, having stamped on it the letter *aleph*, which scintillates and constantly moves up and down. The second portal is on the north side with the letter *daleth* stamped on it, [212b] which likewise scintillates, and without pause moves up and down. Its scintillation, however, is inconstant, as sometimes it flashes brightly and sometimes its light completely disappears. The third portal is on the west with the letter *nun* stamped on it, likewise scintillating. Finally, there is the fourth portal on the

south, having stamped on it a point, the Lower Point, a tiny point, visible and yet not visible, to wit, the letter *yod*. The other letters of the alphabet are also stamped on that firmament, numbering altogether twenty-two, all adorned with crowns. The firmament revolves on the Living Beings, carrying with it letters arranged in a certain grouping which symbolizes the Divine Unity, viz. *Aleph Teth, Beth Heth, Gimel Zain, Daleth Vau*. These letters themselves symbolize other higher letters. When that firmament is illumined there become revealed four mystical groupings of letters, each composing the Divine Name, and together spelling out the thirty-two Paths of Wisdom. At that moment a dew descends from that firmament, distilled through the letters of the mystery of the Divine Name, which forms the food of all the celestial holy legions and hosts, who gather it up joyfully. When chastisement impends over the world, the first of each pair of these letters is absorbed, as it were, in the second, thus leaving only *Teth, Heth, Zain, Vau* (*ṬḤZV*). Then a voice from the north is stirred up so that all know that Rigour prevails over the world; at that moment, also, that firmament assumes a colour that comprehends all colours. When there is a movement in the eastern side of the firmament it embraces the aforesaid four four-faced Holy Beasts with the aforesaid letters, who all rise upward. The hidden letters then reappear, restoring the mystical letter-grouping of *Aleph-Teth, Beth-Ḥeth, Gimel-Zain, Daleth-Vau;* the firmament is irradiated, a resounding voice proceeds from the letters, reaching the highest heavens, and celestial food and blessings and beatitudes are diffused again in plenty for those who come to partake of it. The letters then in their turn make the tour of the firmament until they reach the southern side; then they ascend, scintillating with a fiery gleam. Then in the centre of that firmament there is traced out a certain letter, to wit, *Yod*, followed by another three flaming letters, viz. *Hé, Vau, Hé*. These letters swing up and down, sending out thirteen flames of fire. Then there descends a something which becomes absorbed in these letters, is adorned by them as with a crown, but remains undisclosed. Great joy is then among all the hosts and

legions, hymns and praises ascend on high, the firmament begins a second time to rotate and revolve, and the aforementioned letters—*'t, bḥ, gz, dv*—become absorbed in the supernal letters that contain the mystery of the Divine Name just mentioned, and these letters that were in the centre of the firmament, containing the mystery of the Divine Name are now traced out in the north side. They are traced out most faintly, and there is no one who can observe steadily that side. The celestial hosts then break forth in melodious song, reciting: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. III, 12). [213a] And they repeat the same from all sides. As the firmament revolves, the volume of melodious sound, with the same refrain, goes up from all the numerous legions, at each of the four sides of the firmament. The firmament then becomes illumined with an exceedingly bright light, brighter than before, displaying, in a different mode, a colour composed of the whole range of colours; and the aforementioned Divine Name of four letters becomes augmented by an additional letter from on high, to wit, the letter *Vau*, resulting in *V-YHVH* (lit. and *YHVH*), expressive of both the male and female principles. Yet the Divine Name is not perfect except when it is composed of the nine letters, to wit, *YHVH ELHYM* (Elohim). When these letters are thus joined, that firmament shines with thirty-two lights, and all is joy, all is joined in one recondite union, both the upper and the lower world. In that same firmament, again, there is on the north side a flaming light that is never extinguished, to the right of which there are impressions of other letters, forming ten Sacred Names, in which are implicit seventy Names.

'By that firmament are borne along all the lower firmaments within the region of holiness as far as the boundary of the "other" firmaments belonging to the "other side". These latter are called "curtains of goats' hair", allusion to which is made in the verse, "And he made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle." For there are curtains and curtains. The "curtains of the tabernacle" are the counterpart of the firmaments spread over the Holy Beasts in the Holy Tabernacle; whereas the "curtains of goats'

hair" represent altogether different firmaments, those of the "other side". The former contain the mystery of the legions of the holy spirits; the latter represent the substance of mundane matter, of bodily appetites and actions, and hence form the outer covering of the inner firmaments similar to the shell that surrounds the brain. The latter are called "heavens of the Lord". Opposite to these lower heavens are the supernal heavens, heavens within heavens, called the "heavens of the Holy Beasts", in allusion to the supernal mighty Holy Beasts. They contain the mystery of the Torah, and on the highest heaven of all, namely, the eighth,[1] there are engraved the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. That heaven is supported by the supernal Holy Beasts, and itself is of an essence entirely undisclosed, beyond any attribute of colour, whilst being itself the source and origin of all colours and all light. There is neither light nor darkness in it, but the souls of the righteous, as from behind a wall, discern the light which it sends forth and which illumines the supreme heaven, a light never ceasing, a light not to be known or grasped. There are lower heavens and upper heavens, both referred to in the passage, saying, "The heavens, heavens of the Lord" (Ps. CXV, 16), but this is the supremest heaven, raised [213*b*] over them all. Up to this point some hint is given by the holy names by which the Holy One, blessed be He, is called, but beyond this point the discernment even of the wisest cannot pierce, and it is altogether outside the range of our faculties, excepting for one gleam of light, too minute to be dwelt on. Happy is the portion of whoever can penetrate into the mysteries of his Master and become absorbed into Him, as it were. Especially does a man achieve this when he offers up his prayer to his Master in intense devotion, his will then becoming as the flame inseparable from the coal, and his mind concentrated on the unity of the lower firmaments, to unify them by means of a lower name, then on the unity of the higher firmaments, and finally on the absorption of them all into that most high firmament. Whilst a man's mouth and lips are moving, his heart and will must soar to the height of heights, so as to

[1] Binah.

acknowledge the unity of the whole in virtue of the mystery of mysteries in which all ideas, all wills and all thoughts find their goal, to wit, the mystery of the *En-Sof* (Infinite, Illimitable).

'We should repeat the same endeavour at each prayer, so as to adorn each day with the crown of the mystery of its corresponding supernal day, by means of our prayer. At night a man should represent to himself that he is about to quit this world, and that his soul will leave him and return to the Master of all. For every night the Supreme Point absorbs in itself the souls of the righteous. Here is a recondite truth for the initiate. The lower firmament, as mentioned above, is sustained by that Point. That firmament, moreover, is a fusion of the upper and the lower worlds, having its basis in the lower world, much as the dark flame of a lamp merges into the white flame above while having its basis below in a wick sunk in oil. So in the daytime that Point is essentially above, but in the night it is essentially below, becoming absorbed in the souls of the righteous, since at night all things return to their original root and source. So the soul mounts up, returning to its source, whilst the body lies still as a stone, thus reverting to its own source of origin. Whilst in that state the body is beset by the influences of the "other side", with the result that its hands become defiled and remain so until they are washed in the morning, as explained elsewhere. The souls of the righteous, in ascending in the night into their own celestial spheres, are woven into a crown, as it were, with which the Holy One, blessed be He, adorns Himself. There are night attendants who have charge of those souls, take them up on high and offer them up as an acceptable sacrifice to their Master. The supreme chieftain of those legions bears the name of Suriya, and each soul, as it passes through all the firmaments, is first brought before him, and he inhales its scent, as it says: "And he will inhale the scent of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. XI, 3). He takes them under his charge, and passes them on higher, until they arrive at the place of sacrifice. There all the souls are absorbed in the Supreme Point; as a woman conceives a child, so does the Supreme Point conceive them, experiencing a rapturous

pleasure in absorbing in itself the souls with all their good deeds and Torah studies performed during the past day. The souls then re-emerge, that is to say, they are born anew, each soul being fresh and new as at its former birth. This is the inner meaning of the words, "They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. III, 23). That is to say, "they (the souls) are new every morning", [214a] because "great is thy faithfulness" to absorb them and then let them out as newly-born. Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world to come.'

By now day had broken, and R. Abba said: 'Let us rise and offer up praise to the Master of the World.' Then, after having recited their prayers, the Companions returned to him and said: 'Let him who began the discourse conclude it. Happy is our portion that we have been privileged to adorn the Holy One, blessed be He, with the crown of the recondite teachings of Wisdom.' R. Abba then began the following discourse:

AND BEZALEL MADE THE ARK OF ACACIA WOOD, ETC. 'The Holy Assembly', he said, 'have, indeed, already expounded the esoteric aspect of the Tabernacle. Yet there is still much here to ponder on, as its inner meaning is adorned with many mysteries of the teaching of Wisdom. The ark is one vessel with six sides, and it contains and conceals in its interior the Written Law that reaches out into the six directions of the creation. Again, the ark consists of five boards and an ark-cover, to symbolize the five books of the Pentateuch with the one grade that pervades them all, called the mystery of the covenant. Together, the six-sided ark and the Torah represent the inwardness of the nine grades that are summed up in the two Divine Names—*YHVH*, *ELoHYM*—whilst the ark-cover represents the most high heaven that surrounds all, covers up all, so that the whole remains undisclosed. Now we have to investigate the recondite significance of the ark. For there is ark and ark, one the opposite of the other. In connection with one,' continued R. Abba, 'it is written: "All this did Araunah the king give to the king", etc. (2 Sam. XXIV, 23). Now, even if we

allow that Araunah was a king, yet seeing that David conquered Jerusalem and made it his own, as it says, "David took the stronghold of Zion", etc. (*Ibid.* V, 7–8), why did he need to buy the spot from Araunah with money? A simple explanation would be that although David was the ruler of Jerusalem, that spot was the heritage of Araunah, and so it could only be taken from him by his consent; in the same way as Ahab, although king and ruler in Israel, in order to acquire the vineyard of Naboth the Jesreelite, had first to obtain the latter's consent. But a deeper explanation is that Araunah indeed was king and ruler of that spot, and when the time came for it to pass out of his possession, this could only be effected at the cost of much blood and slaughter to Israel. Subsequently, when the Destroying Angel in the execution of his work of slaughter reached that spot he could not prevail there, and his strength was exhausted. It was, indeed, the spot where Isaac was bound on the altar that Abraham built; and so, when the Holy One looked at that place He was filled with compassion, as we read, "and as he was about to destroy, the Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil" (1 Chron. XXI, 15), meaning that He beheld there the binding of Isaac, and so had compassion on them, and straightway said to the Destroying Angel: "It is enough", etc. (*Ibid.*); the words, "it is enough", have the same import as the similar words in the passage, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain" (Deut. I, 6), as much as to say: "This place has been long enough in thy possession; thou hast had it for many years, now return it to its rightful master." And for all that it could only be taken from him at a great sacrifice of life and money. What is the significance of the name "Araunah"? The same name is also written "Ornan" (1 Chron. XXI, 15). So long as that place was in his possession he was called Araunah, a word of five letters, for in the case of such a niggard who represents the "other side", the addition of a letter implies a degradation, whereas for the side of holiness the diminution of the letters implies an added holiness. [214b] Observe now that the *holy side* is called the ark (*aron*) of the covenant, and such an ark is appropriate for the placing therein of the bodily remains of a

man. For this reason, when the holy and pious depart this world their bodies are placed in an ark, since the "other side" has not been provided with a body and has nothing in common with the body of Man. Of Joseph we find it written, "and he was put in a coffin (*aron*) in Egypt" (Gen. L, 26), where the word *vayyisem* (and he was put) is written with a double *yod*. For what reason ?[1] Because he kept unimpaired the symbol of the holy covenant and therefore merited to be put into the ark.' R. Abba here wept, saying: 'Woe to mankind, that they are unaware of this disgrace ! Alas, for their offence, in that everyone who wishes is placed in an ark ! For this privilege should be reserved for those who are conscious that never in their lives have they transgressed against the sign of the covenant. To put anyone else into an ark is to desecrate it. There is a certain symbolism in this connection which makes it fitting for him and for no other; and woe to him who, notwithstanding his abuse of the sign of the covenant, is admitted into the ark—woe to him who abused it during life, woe to him who now abuses it when dead, woe to him for impairing the sign and the ark of the holy covenant, woe for the punishment to be exacted from him for his wrongs committed in this world and for that abuse of the ark ! To this Scripture alludes in the words: "For the rod of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous" (Ps. CXXV, 3). That is to say, when such a one comes up for judgement in the other world, and it is found that in addition to having impaired the sign of the holy covenant stamped on his body he also impaired the ark in the other world, he is excluded from any lot among the righteous and is put outside the category of man, and consequently of all those destined for everlasting life, and is delivered into

[1] Al. Observe that the "holy side" is called "ark of the covenant", that ark being a pit wherein is a receptacle for the Torah in its esoteric aspect, which aspect is the mystery of the image of the pure celestial Body. Corresponding to this, in the terrestrial world an ark has been provided wherein to place the earthly body that symbolizes Man, to wit, the body of him who has preserved the purity of the sign of the holy covenant. Hence the bodies of the holy and pious are placed in an ark, which is fitting only for such a one. Thus in connection with Joseph it is written: "and he was put in a coffin (*aron*)", etc.

the power of the "other side", the side which has no kinship with the mystery of the body of Man. When he is delivered into the power of that side, woe to him, since he is thrown into Gehinnom, whence he will not come out for all eternity. In allusion to such it is written: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have rebelled against me", etc. (Isa. LXVI, 24). This doom, however, is only meted out to those who have not turned with a full repentance sufficient to wipe out all their misdeeds. But even after full repentance it is better for such a one not to be put into the ark, because as long as the body is in being the soul is under sentence and may not enter into its own place. But this is not so with the pious who are worthy to ascend, even whilst their bodies endure. Happy is their portion in this world and in the world to come. As regards the aforementioned sinners, there is no sin so grievous in the sight of the Holy One as the sin of perverting and impairing the sign of the holy covenant; and he who commits such an offence is excluded from the sight of the Shekinah.

'It is written here: "And Bezalel made the ark." Why did the wise men who made the Tabernacle not make the ark as well ? The reason is that Bezalel represented the final part of the body, the symbol of the holy covenant which he kept pure, and hence it was his part to make the ark, which was, as it were, his own portion.' All the Companions then came near and kissed R. Abba. When they came to R. Simeon and repeated to him all the expositions they had heard during that walk he quoted the verse: "But the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. IV, 18). [215a] 'This verse', he said, 'has been already expounded in a way, but there is still a deeper truth underlying it. "The path of the righteous" is the path of truth, the path the Holy One, blessed be He, delights in, the path along which the righteous proceed, with the Almighty, as it were, leading the way whilst all the heavenly legions come down to listen to their expositions and teachings; "as the light of dawn", that is, as a light that continues without ever fading, unlike the path of the wicked, of which it says: "The way of the wicked is as darkness"

etc. (*Ibid.* 19). The following is an alternate comment. What is the difference between "path" (*oraḥ*) and "way" (*derekh*)? A "path" is newly opened and still little trodden, whereas a "way" is a well-worn track, already traversed by many feet. Hence that whereon the righteous walk is called "path", since they are the pioneers who open up a new path for themselves; and even though others have preceded them, yet when they walk on it it becomes a new path, as though never trodden on by any before. For they metamorphose it in virtue of the many sublime and holy teachings with which they delight the Holy One. Moreover, the Shekinah now goes in that path, which she did not before. But "way", on the other hand, is a common road, open to all and trodden on, even by the wicked. This is hinted in the words, "Who maketh a *way* (*derekh*) in the sea" (*Ibid.* XLIII, 16), the word "way" being used because it is accessible to the "other side", the unwanted influence that exerts its power to defile the Tabernacle, and so the righteous are left to themselves, to rule over the region called "path" (*oraḥ*), as already said. "Way" is thus open for all, for this "side" and its opposite, and you, O exalted saints,' concluded R. Simeon, 'you have entertained the heavenly Visitor (*oreaḥ*), and sublime expositions have been uttered and displayed by you in the presence of the Ancient of Days. Happy is your portion!'

R. Simeon further discoursed, citing the verse: "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him" (Deut. XXXIV, 9). 'In many places we have laid down', he said, 'that the face of Moses was as the face of the sun, whilst that of Joshua was like that of the moon. For the moon has no light of its own, but receives its light by reflection from the sun until it becomes full, when it may be said to reach its state of completeness. The completeness of the moon is when it is called "reflection" (*d'muth*), in relation to the supernal Sun called *YHVH*, for it receives this name only when it is complete, for it has many names according to its various manifestations. So when it is complete on all sides it is called *YHVH*, its completeness corresponding to the higher completeness. The Daughter, as it were, is the heiress of the

Mother. This is the case on the fifteenth day of the month, and thus, "On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of Tabernacles" (Lev. XXIV, 34). It is also written, "Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of Atonement" (*Ibid.* 27), which has the same allusion. When the World-to-be is symbolized by all the Ten Utterances, and centred in this month, it is first named "ten", and afterwards when the moon is joined with them in completeness it is named "fifteen", the *Hé* (=5) joining the *Yod* (=10), both forming the Divine Name *YH*. In the completed name *YHVH* there is a second *Hé* added, the first *Hé* being associated with the supernal mystery, and the second symbolizing the Providence that provides the lower world with its sustenance. The moon is thus in its completeness, a completeness embracing the upper and the lower worlds, through the inner meaning of the Divine Name, all forming a unity of perfection. Joshua is the symbol of the fulness of the moon, he truly being the son of Nun, as the letter *Nun* is expressive of the recondite significance of the moon. And so "Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom", full in the completeness of the Divine Name. For the Supreme Point, identical with the letter *Yod*, expanded and produced a Spirit, which Spirit produced a Temple. That Spirit then expanded further, and so became six directions. Having expanded through all these, it filled out and caused to come into being the Lower Temple. Thus [215*b*] the Divine Name became manifest in a unity of completeness. "Joshua", then, "was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him", that is, he poured out blessings upon him, and the well, so to speak became filled through him. And you,' concluded R. Simeon, 'you exalted saints, each one of you is filled with the spirit of wisdom and has attained the full phase of the mystic wisdom, inasmuch as the Holy One, blessed be He, found delight in you and had laid His hands upon you. Happy is my portion in that my eyes have seen this, to wit, the fulness of the spirit of wisdom that is in you.'

R. Simeon further discoursed, citing the verse: "Ye shall not eat with the blood; neither shall ye practise divination nor

soothsaying" (Lev. XIX, 26). 'The esoteric teaching of this verse', he said, 'is that if a man eats before he has prayed, as it were, for his blood, it is as though he were practising divination and soothsaying. For in the night man's soul mounts up into heaven to gaze upon the mystery of the Divine Glory, each one according to its merits, and the body is thus left deriving its life-force solely from the blood. And although alive, the man has then a foretaste of death, that life-force being too sluggish to be reawakened on the return of the soul, so as to be able to receive it. For when man awakens from his sleep he is not in a state of purity, because, as explained elsewhere, the "other side" has sway wherever the soul is absent. He has first to purify himself with water, but even then, and although he may have been engaged in studying the Torah, the soul does not resume its former place and sway, and he is still sustained by the blood life-force alone, the force called *nefesh* (soul), which permeates the blood. It is only when he worships his Master in prayer that the blood-force resumes its normal position so that the soul regains its control in its own sphere. It is thus that man attains his proper and perfect condition, with the vital force (*nefesh*) beneath and the soul above. Hence, if a man prays before he eats he puts himself in a proper condition, but if he eats before he prays for his blood to resume its proper sphere, it is as though he were practising divination and soothsaying, seeing that it is the way of the diviner to elevate the "other side", and to degrade the side of holiness. The term *m'naḥesh* (diviner) is related to *naḥash* (serpent), and the diviner is so called because he gives himself over to the Serpent in order to obtain from him power and strength. Such a man is like one serving other gods, and so likewise is he who eats before prayer, worshipping the blood life-force instead of worshipping the Almighty in order to fortify the side of the soul, the side of holiness. Happy is your portion, O exalted saints', continued R. Simeon, 'in that through prayer man's body and soul are edified so that he becomes complete.

'Prayer works a fourfold process of upbuilding which is in essence one. First, it builds up him who prays; secondly,

it builds up this world; there comes, third, the upbuilding of the upper world with all the heavenly hosts; the fourth process of upbuilding is wrought on the Divine Name, so that all the upper and lower regions are embraced in one edifying process, in the manner appropriate. First, as to man himself, it is incumbent on everyone to edify himself by means of meritorious action and holiness and sacrifices and burnt offerings. The upbuilding of this world is then effected when we recite the works of creation, praising the Almighty for each separate work through our reading of the Hallelujah Psalms, such as "Praise him, all ye stars of light, praise him, ye heavens of heavens", etc. (Ps. CXLVIII, 3–4). This is for the sustaining of this world. The third process is wrought on the [216a] upper world with all its hosts upon hosts and legions upon legions. We thus recite: "Creator of ministering spirits . . . And the Ophanim and the holy Ḥayoth. . . ." Finally comes the fourth process, wrought, as it were, on the Divine Name, which, by means of our prayer, becomes perfected. Happy is your portion', concluded R. Simeon, 'in this world and in the world to come. This is truly the effect of those precepts which you carry out by means of prayer.'

He further discoursed as follows. 'It is written: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God" (Deut. X, 20), and also, "and thou shalt fear thy God (*m'elohekho*, lit. from thy God)" (Lev. XIX, 14). Why in the latter passage is it written, "from thy God" and not simply "thy God", as in the former passage? The preposition "from", however, points to the place which is attached to the "brain" and surrounds it. That spot is the central fire that surrounds the innermost fire. For there are three varieties of fire in that connection. The first is the fire that receives fire with joy, the two meeting each other in love and joy; the second is that of which it is written, "and there was brightness (*nogah*) to the fire" (Ezek. I, 13); it is the inmost fire which is joyful at the presence of the other fire. Then comes the third fire which surrounds that brightness, and wherein resides the terror of Severity for the punishment of the wicked. Indeed, there is also a teaching that speaks of four varieties of fire—four

that are in essence one. However, it is in the aforementioned fire that the terror of Severity resides. Hence "thou shalt fear (that which comes) *from* thy God", meaning: "Thy fear shall start from, or be inspired by, His punishment." Furthermore, we should combine fear with love, fear on one side and love on the other. We have to fear on account of the punishment that proceeds from the one side for the transgression of the precepts of the Torah—for once this is begun, the side that inflicts it never relaxes until the transgressor is exterminated from this world and from the world to come. Man has thus to fear that fire which is the seat of fear. That fire spreads out into another fire outside, belonging to another object of fear, in regard to which it is written, "ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites" (Judges VI, 10). But the aforementioned fire belongs to the holy side, and is the one that surrounds that brightness (*nogah*) mentioned before. The other and extraneous fire at times joins this fire, and at other times moves away from it. When it does join, it turns into darkness so as to darken and shut out the light of the other fires. After fear comes love. This is esoterically expressed by saying: "After fear has hovered over a man's head there awakens love, which belongs to the right side." For he who worships out of love attaches himself to a very sublime region and to the holiness of the "World-to-be", by reason of love ascending to the "right side" for its attachment and adornment. Think not, however, that worship coming from the side of fear is no worship at all. In truth it is worship highly to be prized. It does not ascend, however, so as to join the highest part of the supernal sphere. This is reserved for worship inspired by love, and he who worships in a spirit of love is the man destined for the future world. Happy is the portion of such a one in that he exercises dominion over the region of fear, love being the sole power dominating fear in virtue of its belonging to the recondite influence of the right. It is further essential in the performance of our worship to avow the unity of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, and to avow the oneness of the upper and lower members and grades, and to combine them all in the spot to which they fittingly converge. This

is the recondite significance of the declaration: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. VI, 4). The term *SHeMa'* (hear) is esoterically analysed into *SHeM* (*name*) and the letter *'Ain* (= 70), that is, one Name comprising seventy names whilst remaining a unity. "Israel" here signifies "Ancient Israel", in contrast to "Little Israel", of whom it is written: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him" (Hos. XI, 1). "Ancient Israel" symbolizes the union of the Shekinah with her Spouse, and in pronouncing that name we have to concentrate our mind on the principle of unity, [216b] on the union of the two habitations; we have to put all our being, all the members of our body, our complete devotion, into that thought so as to rise and attach ourselves to the *En-sof* (Infinite), and thus achieve the oneness of the upper and the lower worlds. The words, "the Lord our God" are to reunite all the Members to the place from which they issued, which is the innermost Sanctuary. The same thought is continued in the words, "the Lord is one", in the recital of which we have to make our thoughts range throughout all the grades up to the Infinite (*En-sof*) in love and fear. This is the method of avowing the unity of God practised by Rab Hamnuna the Venerable, who learnt it from his father, who had it from his master, and so on, till it came from the mouth of Elijah. And it is the correct and proper method. The same Rab Hamnuna further said, that to concentrate the whole idea of unification in the term "one" (*eḥad*) is a still better way; and it is for this reason that we dwell long over the enunciation of the word "one" (*eḥad*), during which we effect the fusion into one of the upper and the lower worlds. As we have learnt, "one" alludes to above, below, and the four quarters of the universe, these being the supernal Chariot, so that all are embraced in a single unity reaching out to the *En-sof* (Infinite). After the recital of "Hear, O Israel . . .", we have to recite the section containing mention of the Exodus from Egypt (Num. XV, 37–41), for the reason that the Shekinah was in the Egyptian exile, and as long as She is in exile there is no union between the upper and the lower worlds. But the redemption from Egypt, attended by all those signs and

wonders, set Her free; and that redemption has to be mentioned by us to show that though She was in chains She is now free, so as to join her heavenly Spouse. It is hence incumbent on us to let the recital of the Redemption be followed closely by our petitionary prayers, as a sign of perfect unity (between the divine aspects) without a rift and without any separation whatever. The mnemonic for this is: "neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband" (Lev. XXI, 7). But, you may say, is She not at present in exile, and so put away? This is not so. She is indeed in exile, but only for the sake of Israel, so as to dwell with them and to shield them, but She is not put away. Now the Shekinah appeared neither during the first Temple nor during the second Temple. In the second Temple, before Israel were driven into exile, She ascended on high, and only after the exile did She make Her abode with them. But She was never put away. Hence the importance of the first redemption, the one from Egypt which comprehended all the four redemptions. The esoteric exposition of the matter is as follows. When the Shekinah left the exile of Egypt, She besought the Holy One, blessed be He, that She might there and then be redeemed with a fourfold redemption, corresponding to the four exiles, so that She might remain free and not be put away any more. This request was granted and the exodus thus embraced for the Shekinah all the four redemptions. At the moment, therefore, of Her union with Her heavenly Spouse there is need for the display, so to speak, of the redemption from Egypt, comprehending as it does the four redemptions. Hence, we have, [217a] in the recital of that redemption, to repeat four times the term "true" before we reach the portion beginning with "Thou hast been the help of our fathers . . .", a prayer which is a firm support for all Israel. Then, in the course of the recital, "Thou hast been . . .", the term "true" recurs again four times, whereby we fortify, confirm and corroborate, as it were, the same four redemptions with the seal and signet of the King. Were not the four redemptions comprehended within the Exodus during the whole of the exile She would not obtain Her adornments so as to manifest the unity of the

Divine Name. We have thus to make mention of the redemption from Egypt in every recital of Sanctification offered to the Holy One, blessed be He, for ever and to all eternity. The inward significance of the Sanctification recitals is, as already stated, that thereby both the upper and the lower worlds, all grades, all the upper and lower legions, become sanctified. Herein are involved sublime mysteries through which the initiated discern the holiness of their Master. Happy is their portion! Happy is your portion," concluded R. Simeon, "and happy my eyes that they have witnessed the awakening of these holy words in this world, inasmuch as they are all inscribed in the world on high before the Holy King.'

He next discoursed on the verse: "Then they that fear the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi III, 16). 'This verse', he said, 'presents a difficulty in using the word *nidb'ru* (lit. they were spoken) instead of *dibbru* (they spoke). What it signifies, however, is the repetition of the words spoken on earth in the upper world, by all the sacred hosts and legions. For the words of the holy Law spoken here below ascend on high, where multitudes come to meet them to take them up and present them before the Holy King, there to be adorned with many crowns woven of the supernal radiances. All these words, then, are *self-spoken*, as it were, before the Most High King. Whoever saw such joy, whoever witnessed such praises, as mount up into all those heavens at the moment those words ascend, whilst the Holy King looks on them and crowns Himself with them! They spring up and down, they settle, as it were, on His bosom for Him to disport Himself with them, whence they ascend toward His head and are woven there into a crown. Hence the words spoken by the Torah: "and I would be playing always before him" (Prov. VIII, 30). In the verse cited there is twice mention of "them that fear the Lord"; the first indicates the men themselves as they are here below, and the second their images as reflected in their words that ascend on high. This esoteric doctrine is

found in the Book of Enoch, where it says that all the words of exposition uttered by the righteous on earth are adorned with crowns and are arrayed before the Holy One, blessed be He, who delights Himself with them. They then descend and come up again before His presence in the image of that righteous man who gave expression to them, and God then delights Himself with that image. The words, then, are inscribed in "a book of remembrance before Him", so as to endure for evermore. "And they that thought upon His name" is an allusion to those that meditate on the words of Torah in order thereby to cleave to their Master through an insight into the Divine Name, so as to know Him and become equipped with the wisdom of His name in their heart. It is written: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was as the appearance of a sapphire stone, the likeness of a throne" (Ezek. I, 26). This firmament', said R. Simeon, 'is the lower firmament, as you, Companions, have explained. Happy is my portion and happy is your portion, since as regards the supernal firmament there is no one who can ever discern it. Above that lower firmament, then, there is that "sapphire stone", that precious jewel by which it is adorned. It says, "the likeness of *a* throne", and not "*the* throne". For there is throne and throne. The term "the throne" would signify the Supernal Throne, which is undisclosed and beyond all knowledge and comprehension. Hence it says here "a throne", to wit, a lower throne. The verse cited continues: "and upon the likness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man" (*Ibid.*). Why say both "likeness" and "appearance" when "likeness" would be enough? The explanation is that the term "likeness" alludes to the higher glory, the image of Man; whereas the word "appearance" embraces the likenesses generated in his words of Torah exposition and mystic doctrines, [217*b*] which ascend and are crowned on high, and afterwards assume the image of man, of those righteous ones who crown them, for the delight of the Holy One, blessed be He. And you, Companions, behold, the Holy One disports Himself now with those words you uttered, and you are standing now before your Master as represented by your

holy images. For when I saw you and looked well at your inward forms, I saw that you were stamped with the mystical impress of Adam, and so I knew that your image is stationed on high. In this way the righteous are destined in the future to be distinguished in the eyes of all men, and to make their holy countenance manifest before all the world. It is thus written: "all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed that the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. LI, 9).'

At this point R. Simeon noticed R. Jose meditating worldly matters. Said he to him: 'Jose, arise and make complete your image, inasmuch as you are short of one letter.' R. Jose then rose up and joyously absorbed himself in expositions of the Torah. R. Simeon then looked at him again, and said: 'R. Jose, now you are whole before the Ancient of Days, and your image is complete.'

R. Simeon further discoursed, citing the verse: "And they made the plate (*ẓiẓ*) of the holy crown of pure gold", etc. (Ex. XXXIX, 30). 'Why was the plate called *ẓiẓ* (lit. gaze, peep)? Because it was a reflector, mirroring the character of any man gazing at it. For in that plate were graven the letters of the Divine Name, and when a righteous man appeared before it the letters so engraved bulged out and rose luminous from their sockets, from which a light shone on the man's face with a faint sparkling. For a moment the priest would notice the reflection of the letters on the man's face; but when he looked more closely he would see nothing more than a faint light, like the reflection of shining gold. But the first momentary glimpse that the priest caught was a sign to him that that man was pleasing to the Holy One, blessed be He, and that he was destined for the world to come, inasmuch as that light was an illumination from on high and a mark of divine favour. On the other hand, if a man's face failed to show any such sacred sign when he stood before the plate, then the priest knew that that man was an evildoer, and in need of atonement and intercession.'

R. Judah began a discourse on the verse: "Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them; . . . and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that", etc. (Ruth II, 9). 'This verse', he said, 'raises a

problem; for the point of it is not at all apparent.' R. Isaac interposed, saying: 'But are there not many more verses in Scripture which seem to be needless, and the purpose of which is not apparent, yet we know that they conceal within them deep esoterical doctrines.' Then R. Judah, resuming his discourse, said: 'As regards this verse, whoever just looks at it and does not study it deeply is like a man who looks at a dish without tasting it. In truth, there is an inner meaning in it, and it has been composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It amounts to this. Boaz, the Judge of Israel, observed the modesty of that righteous woman in that she did not turn her eyes hither and thither, but only looked straight in front of her, and that she had a benignant eye, and that there was no trace of impudence in her. He thus spoke in praise of her eyes. For there are eyes that throw a blight on any spot on which they are cast. But he observed in her a kindly eye, and he also saw that everything prospered in her hands, that the more she gleaned the more the gleaning in the field increased; and so Boaz recognized that the Holy Spirit hovered over her. Hence he thus addressed her, saying: "Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them", to wit, "after thine eyes". For the phrase "after them" cannot be construed as alluding to the gleaners, as if so it should have been written "and glean thou" instead of "and go thou". Boaz thus bade her "go after" her eyes, having observed that her eyes carried with them a blessing and were the cause of a manifold increase in the gleaning. "Other people", he as much as said, "are not [218a] permitted to follow after their eyes, but thou mayest follow thine eyes, for they are the begetters of manifold blessings." The verse may also be explained as follows. Boaz saw, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that great kings and rulers were destined to issue from her, they being called the "eyes" of the people, as in the passage: "And it shall be, if it be done in error through the eyes of the congregation" (Num. XV, 24), alluding to the Sanhedrin. For, as the members of the body must follow the eyes, which are the leaders of the body, so kings, members of the Sanhedrin, and other rulers, lead the way for the people to follow. This is thus what

Boaz indicated in his words: "Let thine eyes be in the field". The term "field" is a reference to Zion and Jerusalem, as it is written: "Zion shall be plowed as a field" (Micah III, 12), and also, "as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27), in allusion to Jerusalem. Hence, "Let thine eyes be on the field", that is, the rulers that were destined to come forth from her should have their centre only in Jerusalem. Boaz continued: "where they do reap", inasmuch as from that "field" all the peoples of the world would reap law and illumination, as Scripture says: "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law" (Isa. II, 3); "and go thou after them", meaning "after the virtuous deeds that I observed in thee". "Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee": this can be taken literally, women being easily swayed. "And when thou art athirst": this is a euphemism, Boaz saying, in effect: "When thou conceivest a desire to attach thyself to a man in order to raise up seed", "go unto the vessels", to wit, to the righteous, who are called vessels, as it is written, "be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord"(Isa. LII, 11); they are the vessels which mankind will in time to come bring as a present to King Messiah; they are the "vessels of the Lord", in whom the Holy One, blessed be He, rejoices; and although broken vessels, bruised in this world for the sake of observing the Torah, yet the Holy One makes use only of them: "attach thyself to such vessels", Boaz bade Ruth, "and drink", etc.'

R. Jose began a discourse on the verse: "And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry", etc. (Ruth III, 7). 'His heart was merry,' he said, 'by reason of his having pronounced a benediction over his food; and there is, further, a deeper significance here, to wit, that whoever says a blessing after his meal satisfies his "heart", that which is by him alluded to in the words: "In thy behalf my heart hath said" (Ps. XXVII, 8), also in, "but God is the rock of my heart" (*Ibid.* LXXIII, 26). For, since the blessing offered up for one's food is precious before the Holy One, blessed be He, whoever pronounces such a blessing after he is satisfied does good and brings joy to "another region". So here "another region" derived enjoyment from the blessing after

the meal that the righteous Boaz pronounced, and thus we read, "and his heart was merry". Why pronounce a blessing? It is because the sustenance of man is troublesome, so to speak, for the Almighty, but when the words of the benediction pronounced by a man after eating and drinking ascend on high, that place derives an enjoyment from those words, and so benefit is drawn from the food, both below and above. This is a recondite teaching known to the Companions. Furthermore, on weekdays "that region" enjoys only the words of the after-meal benediction that ascend on high. On Sabbath days, however, there is an enjoying on high of the very food enjoyed on earth by man in virtue of this being part of the holy joy of the Sabbath. There is thus here a merging of the heavenly and the earthly. This recondite teaching is indicated in the passage, "for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. XXIX, 14), alluding to the enjoyment in heaven of the holy joy in the Sabbath repasts partaken of below. Whoever pronounces the after-meal benediction must do so devotedly, and in a joyful mood unmingled with any tinge of sadness, inasmuch as in giving thanks he is giving of his own to someone else; and thus, as he gives thanks joyfully and unstintedly, so will sustenance be given to him joyfully and unstintedly. By the benedictions, each commencing with "Blessed art Thou", are sustained the four legions that rule over the four corners of the world. Hence we ought to recite them with heartiness. So Scripture says: "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor" (Prov. XXII, 9), [218b] where the term *yeborakh* (shall be blessed) can be read *yebarekh* (shall—or does—bless); and the verse thus amounts to saying that we should pronounce the after-meal blessing in a bountiful spirit, for through that blessing and our joyousness in uttering it we provide, as it were, sustenance for the poor, to wit, for that region[1] that possesses naught of itself, but draws its sustenance from all sides and is made up from all sides. Now, these teachings have only been transmitted to the initiated who are conversant with the sublime mystical doctrines and with the paths of

[1] *Malkuth*.

the Torah. Observe now that Boaz was bountiful of heart and free from all presumptuousness. It is thus written of him: "he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn" (Ruth III, 7). This is esoterically elucidated by the passage: "Thy belly is like a heap of wheat" (S.S. VII, 3), and so we learn from here that whoever pronounces the after-meal grace joyfully and with devotion, when he quits this world there is a place prepared for him in the sacred and mysterious mansions. Happy is the man who gives heed to the precepts of his Master and knows their recondite significance, since there is no precept in the Torah but contains manifold sublime recondite teachings and radiances and resplendencies; but the sons of men know not nor give they heed to the glory of their Master. Happy is the portion of the righteous who are assiduous in the study of the Torah; happy are they in this world and in the world to come.

'Our sages have said that the arrogant and shameless have no portion in this world nor in the world to come. All the arrogant of Israel, when they gazed on the Plate, became contrite of heart and looked inwardly into their own deeds. For the Plate possessed miraculous powers, and thus was the means of making all who looked on it feel ashamed of their misdeeds. In this way the Plate secured atonement for the arrogant and the insolent. The letters of the Divine Name engraved on it stood out shining and flashing, and whoever looked at that flashing had to cast down his eyes in fear, and become contrite of heart, and thus the Plate effected their atonement. Of a similar potency was the Incense. For whoever smelled the smoke of the pillar that ascended from the "smoke-raiser"[1] became cleansed of heart and intent on worshipping his Master: the taint of the evil spirit disappeared from him, leaving him to serve with single heart his Father in heaven. The Incense thus possessed the potency of breaking completely the evil spirit in man. As the Plate possessed miraculous powers, so did the Incense, nothing in the world having power to crush the "other side" like the Incense. Thus we read: "Take thy fire-pan, and put fire therein from off the altar, and lay incense thereon . . . for

[1] One of the ingredients of the incense.

there is wrath gone out from the Lord: the plague is begun" (Num. XVII, 11). For there is nothing so beloved by the Holy One, blessed be He, as the Incense. It is able to banish sorcery and all evil influences from the house. Seeing that perfumes prepared by men possess the virtue to counteract, by their odour and fumes, the ill-effects of evil things, how much more so the Incense! It is a firmly established ordinance of the Holy One, blessed be He, that whoever reflects on and recites daily the section of the Incense will be saved from all evil things and sorceries in the world, from all mishaps and evil imaginings, from evil decrees and from death; and no harm will befall him that day, as the "other side" has no power over him. But it must be read with devotion.' R. Simeon remarked: 'Were people to know how precious the offering of the Incense is to the Holy One, blessed be He, they would take every word of the passage where it is enjoined and make it into a crown for their heads, as it were, a crown of gold. And whoever studies it ought to reflect deeply on the way it was carried out; and through the reciting of it daily with devotion a man merits a portion in this world and in the world to come, and keeps away death from himself and from the world, and is saved from all punishments in this world, from the "evil sides", from the punishment of Gehinnom, and from strange powers. When the pillar of smoke ascended from the burning Incense, the priest used to see the mystical letters of the Divine Name [219a] ascending on high in that pillar. Then numerous holy legions would surround the pillar on all sides until it rose in the midst of light and gladness to the region where it diffused joy and knitted together the upper world and the lower world in a complete unity, thereby achieving atonement for the evil spirit in man and for idolatry, which is of the "other side".'

R. Simeon further discoursed on the verse: "And thou shalt make an altar (*mizbeah*) to burn incense upon" (Ex. XXX, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'raises a problem, for we find that there were two altars, namely, the altar of burnt-offering and the altar of incense, the former the outer altar and the latter the inner one. Now, why was the altar of incense called

mizbeah (lit. slaughtering-place), seeing that it had no connection with animal slaughter? The explanation is that this altar was efficacious in defeating and subduing the numerous powers of the "other side", so as to make them powerless and unable to act as accusers. Hence the name *mizbeah* (place of slaughter). The "evil side", when it beheld the smoke of the incense ascending in a pillar, was subdued, and fled, and was quite unable to approach the Tabernacle. Now, because that joy was shared by no one beside the Holy One, blessed be He, by reason of this offering being so precious in His sight, that altar was placed in the innermost part of the Tabernacle, for it was the repository of blessings, and was therefore hidden from the eye of man. In regard to this, it is written: "And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed" (Num. XVII, 13). For Aaron put the Angel of Death in chains so that he could not exercise dominion nor execute any judgement. It is a traditional teaching that wherever people recite with heartfelt devotion the portion relating to the incense there will be immunity from death and from injury; nor will any other nation have power over that place. The name, "altar to burn incense upon", further tells us that the altar had to be consecrated by the burning of incense. It further teaches us, in accordance with the Chaldaic rendering, that it is forbidden to burn incense anywhere save on coals of fire taken with the censer from this altar. Observe that whoever is pursued by Rigour needs the remedy of incense-burning to save him, as also repentance before his Master, this helping greatly to keep chastisement away from him. That will assuredly result if the man is accustomed to recite the incense-ordinance twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, corresponding to the precept, "And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices; every morning . . . at dusk, he shall burn it" (Ex. XXX, 7–8). And this service, moreover, perpetually upholds the world, as is indicated in the phrase, "a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations" (*Ibid.* 8); truly it is a means of upholding both the lower world and the upper world. Where the daily recital of the incense-burning does not take place, there heavenly judgements impend, many

people die there, and other nations obtain dominion. Thus Scripture says, "a perpetual incense before the Lord" (*Ibid.*), indicating that it abides in the presence of the Lord, more than all other modes of worship, it being the most precious and beloved to the Holy One, blessed be He. Prayer, indeed, is the highest service of all, yet is incense-burning dear and acceptable to the Almighty. Observe the difference between prayer and incense-offering. Prayer has been instituted to take the place of the sacrifices that Israel used to offer, but none of the sacrifices had the same value as the incense. There is, further, this difference between the two. Prayer repairs damage which has been done, but incense does more—it strengthens, it binds together, it is the greatest light-bringer. It was incense that removed the evil taint (*zuh'ma*) and purified the Tabernacle, so that the whole was illumined, renewed, and knitted together into a combined whole. Hence the incense-recital must always precede our daily prayer as a means of removing the evil taint from the world, inasmuch as it acts as a daily therapeutic like the offering itself, in which God delighted. Now we find it written of Moses: "And the Lord said unto Moses: Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte", etc. (*Ibid.* XXX, 34). Why specifically in this place "unto thee"? It means "for thy sake", that is, "for thy satisfaction and gain". The purification of a woman redounds to the satisfaction of her husband. So, esoterically, we have thus to read that ordinance as saying: "Take unto thee sweet spice for the purpose of removing the evil taint, that the Shekinah and Her Spouse may be joined in sanctified union." Happy thus the portion [219*b*] of Moses! Similarly do we read: "Take thee a bull calf for a sin offering" (Lev. IX, 2), an ordinance meant personally for Aaron to atone for the sin of the golden calf which he brought upon Israel. So here Moses was bidden "Take unto thee", that is, "take for thy benefit and use" the incense (*q'toreth*), which is potent to bind together (*qatar*), to illumine and to remove the evil taint. The *Daleth* is linked to the *Hé*, the *Hé* to the *Vau*, the *Vau* ascends and is adorned with the *Hé*, the *Hé* is illumined by the *Yod*, and the whole ascends, reaching out to the *En-sof* (Infinite, Illimitable), so that there results one organic

whole, interrelated under one principle, the most exalted of all. From thence and upward the whole is adorned as with a crown by the ineffableness of the *En-sof;* and the Divine Name in its mysteriousness is illumined and is adorned on all sides, and the worlds are all wrapt in joy, the lamps radiate their lights, and sustenance and blessing pour down on all the worlds. All this follows the hidden virtue of the incense, without which the evil taint would not be removed. All thus depends on it. Observe that the offering of the incense used to precede all other services, and hence its recital should be a prelude to our service of hymns and praises, as these latter do not ascend, nor is the required readjustment and unity achieved until the evil taint is removed. So Scripture says: "And he shall make atonement for the holy place . . . and because of their transgressions, even all their sins" (Lev. XVI, 16), first "atonement for the holy place" and then for "their transgressions". We, too, thus have first to remove the evil taint and purge the holy place, and then engage in song and hymn and prayer, as already said. Happy are Israel in this world and in the world to come, inasmuch as they know how to effect adjustment on high and below; to achieve adjustment from the lower world upwards until the whole is bound together in the most sublime union. The process of adjustment performed in the lower world is by means of the impressed letters of the Ineffable Name by which the Holy One, blessed be He, is named.'

R. Simeon and R. Eleazar his son were one night sitting together studying the Torah. Said R. Eleazar to his father, R. Simeon: 'It is written: "Unto the woman he said: I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail, in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband", etc. (Gen. III, 16). We have learned that this passage contains a profound mystical teaching. One may comprehend this passage in its terrestrial significance, but what corresponds in the supernal world?' R. Simeon cited the verse: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks", etc. (Ps. XLII, 2). 'This verse has already been expounded,' he said. 'There is, however, a certain female animal that has under her daily charge

a thousand keys, and that pants continually after the water brooks to drink and quench her thirst, of which it is thus written, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks." It is to be observed that this verse commences with a masculine subject, "hart" (*'ayyal*), and continues with a feminine predicate, *tha'erog* (she panteth). The recondite explanation of this is that it is an allusion to the male-female as one undivided and inseparable; and so it is the female part of the same that "panteth for the water brooks" and then becomes impregnated from the male element, and is in labour, coming under the scrutiny of Rigour. But at the moment when she is about to be delivered of offspring the Holy One, blessed be He, prepares for her a huge celestial serpent through whose bite she is safely delivered. And this is the hidden meaning of, "I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail", for she is in daily convulsions and pain because of the deeds of mankind: "in pain thou shalt bring forth children", a hidden allusion to the Serpent who casts a gloom over the faces of mankind; "and thy desire shall be to thy husband": this is in harmony with the expression, "she panteth for the water brooks"; "and he shall rule over thee": this has been already expounded elsewhere. Why all this ? It was on account of the Moon's dissatisfaction with her state, in punishment for which, as tradition teaches us, her light was diminished, also her power was reduced so that she is beholden to what they grant her from outside. It may be asked, Why is the Serpent necessary in this connection ? It is because it is he who opens the passage for the descent of souls into the world. For if he did not open the way, no soul would come down to animate a man's body in the world. So Scripture says, "sin coucheth at the door" (Gen. III, 7), alluding to the celestial door through which pass the souls at birth to emerge into this world. He, the Serpent, waits at that door. It is true, when the souls about to emerge are such as are to enter sanctified bodies, he is not present, having no dominion over such souls. But otherwise, the Serpent bites, and that spot is defiled and the soul passing through is unpurified. Herein is concealed a sublime mystical teaching. "In pain thou shalt bring forth children" is a

mystical allusion to that Serpent, as it is [220a] with him that She brings forth souls, since he is responsible for the body and she for the soul, and the two are combined. The Serpent is destined in the future to bring about the birth of the whole of the bodies before its own time comes, as Scripture says: "Before she travailed, she brought forth" (Isa. LXVI, 7). For, whereas the period of the serpent's gestation is seven years, that will be at the end of six. And at that hour, when he will have brought about their birth, he himself will die. Of this, Scripture says: "He will swallow up death for ever" (*Ibid.* XXV, 8), also "Thy dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise" (*Ibid.* XXVI, 19).' Said R. Simeon: 'At the time when the dead will be awakened and be in readiness for the resurrection in the Holy Land, legions upon legions will arise on the soil of Galilee, as it is there that the Messiah is destined to reveal himself. For that is the portion of Joseph, and it was the first part of the Holy Land to be destroyed, and it was thence that the exile of Israel and their dispersion among the nations began, as Scripture says, "but they are not grieved for the hurt of Joseph" (Amos VI, 6). Thus there they will rise up first, for the reason that it is the portion of him who was put in an ark, as it says, "and he was put in an ark in Egypt"(Gen. L, 26), and subsequently was buried in the Holy Land, as it says "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem" (Jos. XXIV, 32); and he it was who kept the purity of the holy covenant symbol in a special degree. As soon as they will rise from the dead all those hosts will march, each man to the portion of his ancestors, as Scripture says, "and ye shall return every man unto his possession" (Lev. XXV, 10). They shall recognize each other, and God will clothe every one in embroidered garments; and they will all come and offer up thanksgiving to their Master in Jerusalem, where there will assemble multitudes upon multitudes. Jerusalem itself will spread out in all directions, to a further extent even than when the exiles returned there. When they assemble and offer up praises to their Master the Holy One, blessed be He, will rejoice in them. So Scripture says: "And they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall

flow unto the goodness of the Lord", etc. (Jer. XXXI, 12), namely, every one to his portion and the portion of his ancestors. And the possession of Israel will extend till it will reach Damietta of the Romans, and even there they will study the Torah. All this has already been stated, and it is in harmony with the Scriptural passage, saying: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust", etc. (Isa. XVI, 19). Blessed be the Lord for evermore! Amen and Amen!'

P'QUDÉ

EX. XXXVIII, 21–XL, 38

THESE ARE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TABERNACLE, EVEN THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY, AS THEY WERE RENDERED ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF MOSES, ETC. R. Hiya, in this connection, quoted the verse: "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full" (Eccles. I, 7). 'Esoterically speaking', he said, 'all the rivers here allude to the sacred brooks and springs which, when filled, pour forth to supply the great ocean. This in turn, when so filled, flows over and affords drink to all the "beasts of the field". These are the lower Chariot group, for, after the ocean has drawn in all the waters it lets them out towards one side, namely, towards the lower Holy Chariots, giving them drink. Now, these are all numbered and noted by name, as we read: "He calleth them all by name" (Isa. XL, 26). Similarly, "These are the accounts of the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony".'

R. Jose cited here the verse: "Oh how abundant is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee" (Ps. XXXI, 20). 'How greatly incumbent', he said, 'it is on the sons of men to reflect on and to study the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, inasmuch as day by day [220b] a voice goes forth and proclaims: "O ye people of the world, take heed unto yourselves, close the gates of sin, keep away from the perilous net before your feet are caught in it!" A certain wheel[1] is ever whirling continuously round and round. Woe to those whose feet lose their hold on the wheel, for then they fall into the Deep which is predestined for the evil-doers of the world! Woe to those who fall, never to rise and enjoy the light that is stored up for the righteous in the world to come! Happy are the righteous in the world to come, for many are the effulgences treasured up for them, many the felicities reserved for them. The verse continues: "which thou hast wrought for them that take refuge in thee in the

[1] v. Zohar, Exodus, 95b.

sight of the sons of men". The word "wrought" refers to the fact that God wrought the light as the medium for the creation of the world. "For them that take refuge in thee", to wit, for those who dwell underneath the shadow of the Holy One, blessed be He; "in the sight of the sons of men", inasmuch as it is the functioning of this light that makes possible the existence of mankind, who are sustained by it despite the fact that the light itself is stored away. Again, "which thou hast wrought", viz. as a medium for the construction of the world according to an orderly plan; and similar to the construction of the world was the construction of the Tabernacle. This is indicated by the similarity of the phrase, "*these* are the accounts of the tabernacle", and "*these* are the generations of the heaven and the earth". For all the generations of heaven and earth were produced by the energy of that treasured-up Light; and likewise, all that came within the "accounts of the tabernacle" was accomplished by the same energy. How do we know this ? Because Scripture says, "And Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah", he being of the "right side"; "and with him was Oholiab", who was of the "left side", for the Tabernacle was made by the energy of both the right side and the left side, and was finally erected by Moses, who united the two.'

R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: "And a throne is established through mercy, and there sitteth thereon in truth, in the tent of David, one that judgeth, and seeketh justice, and is ready in righteousness" (Isa. XVI, 5). 'This has been explained as follows', he said. 'When the Thought arose with glad purpose from the Most Recondite and Unknowable, that gladness impinged on the Thought, so that the latter entered more and more deeply until it was secluded in the interior of a certain supernal undisclosed Palace.[1] It is from thence that there flow forth, first all the rivers of the "right side", and after them the others. On the "right side" it was that the Lower Throne was established, since the Holy One, blessed be He, established that Throne "through mercy, and there sitteth thereon in truth". The Throne is the bearer

[1] *Binah.*

of the seal, the impress of which is Truth, and the Holy One sits on that Throne only in virtue of that seal; "in the tent of David", which is identical with the Lower Throne. "One that judgeth" is from the side of Rigour; "and seeketh judgement", from the side of Mercy; "and is ready in judgement", alluding to the Throne of Judgement, which is on earth. Similarly, the Tabernacle was established only on this side of Mercy, as already said; and thereby were adjusted all the affairs of the lower world.'

THESE ARE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TABERNACLE, EVEN THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY, AS THEY WERE RENDERED ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF MOSES. R. Simeon discoursed here on the verse: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. I, 1). 'This verse', he said, [221a] 'has been already expounded from various aspects. However, when the Holy One, blessed be He, created this world, He created it after the pattern of the supernal world. All the aspects of the upper world he established in the lower, so that the two worlds should be firmly knitted together. Furthermore, the Holy One, when about to create the world, used the Torah as a copy, and also the Divine Name, which is the epitome of the Torah, and by it firmly established the world. By three energies is the world upheld, to wit, by Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge. So Scripture says: "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths were broken up" (Prov. III, 19–20). Observe that with the same three the Tabernacle was built, as it is written: "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge" (Ex. XXXI, 3); and all these three are indicated in the story of Creation. Thus, "In the beginning" corresponds to Wisdom; "God created" hints at Understanding; "the heaven" to Knowledge. Similarly, in the account of the Tabernacle, "These are the accounts of the tabernacle" points to Wisdom; "even the tabernacle of testimony" points to Understanding; "as they were rendered according to the commandment of Moses" points to Knowledge. The

two thus correspond to each other. Now, when God commanded Moses to make the Tabernacle, Moses stood bewildered, not knowing how to proceed until God showed him an actual representation of it. We thus read: "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which is being shown thee in the mount" (Ex. XXV, 40). We learn from the phrase, "after *their* pattern", that the Holy One showed Moses each single part of it in its exact supernal form, after which Moses constructed the earthly Tabernacle. Why does Scripture say, "which thou art shown (*mor'eh*) on the mount" instead of "which thou seest (*roeh*)"? By this we learn that Moses was shown through a dark glass, as it were, the reflection of all the parts of the Tabernacle as they existed on high, and as they were to be constructed here below. Moses, on surveying them, was somewhat perplexed, so God said to him: "O Moses, do thou follow thy indications and I will follow mine." Moses then commenced the work without misgiving.

'When he had completed the whole work it was necessary for him to make an inventory of all the parts in order that the Israelites should not say that there was a surplus of silver or gold which he was keeping back for himself. He had thus to render an account in the presence of Israel according to the injunction, "and ye shall be clear before the Lord and before Israel" (Num. XXXII, 22). Hence it is written: "These are the accounts of the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony." For, indeed, the Holy Spirit made the whole of Israel see the amount of gold and silver offered by them, and then rendered account of them, calling out: "All the gold that was used for the work . . . And the silver of them that were numbered in the congregation was a hundred talents. . . ." For the Holy One, blessed be He, was well pleased with those artificers and thus desired to demonstrate their trustworthiness before all. When the work of the Tabernacle was completed, the "other side" began going to and fro to see if he could not find something wrong, but he could discover no ground to impugn the honesty of the artificers; and the Holy One, blessed be He, made him do obeisance to Moses, and forced him against his will to acknowledge the correctness of the accounts. The integrity of the artificers was thus

revealed to all; and this is the inward significance of the sentence, "These are the accounts of the tabernacle". It is also written, "as they were rendered according to the commandment of Moses", which signifies that by the order of Moses a complete account was rendered of all that concerned the Tabernacle in the presence of himself and the whole of Israel.' [221b]

THESE ARE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TABERNACLE, EVEN THE TABERNACLE OF TESTIMONY. The term "tabernacle" is mentioned twice: once in reference to the one on high, and once in reference to the one below. What constituted the "testimony"? In regard to this, Scripture says, "even the tribes of the Lord (*YH*), as a testimony unto Israel" (Ps. CXXII, 4), whence we learn that that Divine Name is a testimony unto Israel. Verily, these two letters render testimony in every place. Hence "tabernacle" is used as the symbol of this holy name.[1] To this allusion is made in the words, "and my testimony that I shall teach them" (*Ibid.* CXXXII, 12), inasmuch as it is a spot hidden and undisclosed beyond all other spots.

AS WAS RENDERED ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF MOSES. This refers to the testimony, not to the Tabernacle, and we should render "which was entrusted to the mouth of Moses". For after the departure from this world of the patriarchs and all the heads of the tribes, to wit, the sons of Jacob, during Israel's sufferings in exile, the knowledge of the mystery of that supernal Divine Name was forgotten by them, the Name bound up with the testimony, the Name composed of those two letters which are the basis of heaven and earth, of high and low, and of all corners of the universe. But when Moses came, that Name was once more sought after and mentioned. For when he was near the thorn-bush he straightway asked concerning that Name, saying, "and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" (Ex. III, 13). It was there that that Name was entrusted to the mouth of Moses.

[1] *Yah*, which is the name of Binah.

We read further: THROUGH THE SERVICE OF THE LEVITES. The inner significance of this is supplied by the passage: "But the Levite shall serve *Hu* (lit. He)" (Num. XVIII, 23), which is an emblem of the Holy Name. Therein is enclosed the mystery of the Divine Name, which is characterized by "He" (*hu*), and not "Thou" (*atthah*). The Tabernacle is thus fitly identified with the "service of the Levites". Or we may also say that the Tabernacle is the "service of the Levites", inasmuch as they carried it on their shoulders from place to place, as Scripture says: "But unto the sons of Kehath he gave none, because the service of the holy things belonged unto them: they bore them upon their shoulders" (Num. VII, 9).

THESE ARE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TABERNACLE, EVEN THE TABERNACLE OF TESTIMONY. R. Abba began a discourse on the verse: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek, and his resting-place shall be glorious" (Isa. XI, 10). 'In that day', he said, 'when peace will flourish in the world, the root of the Tree of Life will be confirmed, and from it shall all the terrestrial roots ramify and draw strength. "That standeth for an ensign of the people"; to wit, as a sign and symbol of the inwardness of the Divine Name. "Unto him shall the nations seek"; inasmuch as in him is contained the mystery of the Divine Name. The same is indicated in the words; "And many people shall go and say: Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord", etc. (*Ibid.* II, 3). "And his resting-place shall be glorious", to wit, the Temple, of which it is written: "This is my resting-place for ever" (Ps. CXXXII, 14). Now, the resting-place of the root of Jesse, which is called "the glory of the Lord", will never be within the bounds of numbering and calculation. For blessing rests not upon what is counted, but only on what is beyond number. Observe that that Tabernacle was subjected to an inventory, and hence it needed the prayer of Moses for blessings to rest upon it, as Scripture says: "And Moses blessed them" (Ex. XXXIX, 42). What blessing did he pronounce? He said:

"Let it be His will that blessing should rest on your handiwork." Yet blessings did not rest on that Tabernacle until Moses joined it to the heavenly Tabernacle. So Scripture says: "These are the accounts of the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were rendered according to the commandment of Moses." The last words indicate that without the supervision of Moses the accounts could not have been rendered.'

R. Abba continued: 'We find it written that the woman of Zarephath said to Elijah: [222*a*] "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, only a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse" (1 Kings XVII, 12). Now, a "handful" forms a definite measure, hence it was not fitting that any blessing should rest upon the cruse. Nevertheless, we are told further: "For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: The jar of meal shall not be spent, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord will give rain upon the land" (*Ibid.* 14); and so it was. Now if that meal, though measured out and known to consist of a handful, yet did not fail to receive blessing in virtue of the word spoken by Elijah, how much the more so here, in regard to the Tabernacle of the testimony, notwithstanding its having been subjected to numbering, was it meet that blessings should rest on it since its inventory was made by Moses himself!'

THESE ARE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TABERNACLE. R. Hezekiah adduced here the verse: "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. III, 5). 'This verse', he said, 'has been explained as an injunction to Moses to separate from his wife so as to cleave to the Shekinah. The term "holy ground" denotes the Shekinah, to whom Moses attached himself at that moment. The Holy One, blessed be He, thus bound him to Himself in heavenly love and affection, made him, as it were, steward of the House, so that he had only to order and the Holy One would execute that decree, as when he said, "and the ground shall open her mouth", etc. (Num. XVI, 30), and we are told, "And it came to pass as he made an end of speaking . . . that the ground did

cleave asunder" (*Ibid.* 31); or again, as when he said, "Rise up, O Lord . . . Return, O Lord" (*Ibid.* x, 35–36). It is thus written: "as they were counted (*puqqad*) under the commandment of Moses", for it was under the command of Moses that the whole was accomplished and the sum of it counted. The word *piqude* (numberings) here contains an allusion to the message which God gave to Moses, saying: "I have indeed taken count (*paqod paqadti*) of you" (Ex. III, 16). For it was Moses who constituted the voice that uttered the message which heralded the departure of Israel from exile.'

AND BEZALEL, THE SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, ETC. Said R. Judah: 'It has been laid down that Bezalel was of the "right side", and so it was he who perfected the whole work. Furthermore, since Judah was ruler and king over the rest of the tribes, it thus fell to a descendant of his to construct the Tabernacle. It has already been explained that the name Bezalel is a compound of two words, signifying "in the shadow of God", and thus indicates the "right side". Further, from this side Bezalel possessed himself of the wisdom to do all the work. AND WITH HIM WAS OHOLIAB, THE SON OF AHISAMACH, OF THE TRIBE OF DAN. Oholiab symbolized the "left side", the side of Rigour. The Tabernacle was thus made out of the two sides and upheld by both, so as to be a combination and a balancing of the Right and the Left.' R. Judah further cited in regard to this the verse: "Beautiful bowery,[1] the joy of the whole earth; even Mount Zion, the uttermost parts of the north, the city of the great king" (Ps. XLVIII, 3). 'Observe', he said, 'that when the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to create the world, He detached one precious stone from underneath His Throne of Glory and plunged it into the Abyss, one end of it remaining fastened therein whilst the other end stood out above; and this other and superior head constituted the nucleus of the world, the point out of which the world started, spreading itself to

[1] The Zohar takes *noph* in its post-Biblical sense of branch, part of the tree

right and left and into all directions, and by which it is sustained. That nucleus, that stone, is called *sh'thyiah* (foundation), as it was the starting-point of the world. The name *sh'thyiah*, furthermore, is a compound of *shath* (founded) and *Yah* (God), signifying that the Holy One, blessed be He, made it the foundation and starting-point of the world and all that is therein. [222b] Now, the earth's expansion round the central point was completed in three concentric rings, each of a different hue and texture. The first ring, the nearest to the Point, is of the purest and most refined earth-material; the second expansion, surrounding the first, is of a less polished, less refined earth-material than the first, but is superior to the one surrounding it; the third expansion consists of the darkest and coarsest earth-material of all. Then, surrounding that expansion, come the waters of the ocean that surrounds the whole world. Thus the point is in the centre, and the various expansions encircle it. The first expansion embraces the Sanctuary and all its courts and enclosures and all its appurtenances, as well as the whole city of Jerusalem bounded by the wall; the second expansion embraces the whole of the Land of Israel, the Land which was declared holy; the third expansion comprehends the rest of the earth, the dwelling-place of all the other nations. Then comes the great ocean which surrounds the whole. The whole arrangement is symbolized by the structure of the human eye. For just as in the human eye there are three concentric layers surrounding a central point, which forms the focus of vision, so is the world's vision focused in the central point, consisting of the Holy of Holies and the Ark and the Mercy Seat. Hence the description, "a beautiful bowery, the joy of the whole earth", "beautiful" in its appearance, and radiating joy to the whole world. It is compared to a "bowery" because the beauty of a tree is displayed in its branches. Observe that true beauty and symmetry were not manifested in the world until the Tabernacle was finally erected and the Ark brought within the Holy of Holies. From that moment the world appeared at its best, it attained its just balance, and a way was opened through the Tabernacle and past the Ark up to that Point,

that "beautiful bowery, the joy of the whole earth". When that point was reached the Ark broke forth, saying: "This is my resting-place for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps. CXXXII, 14).' R. Jesse said: 'This verse was uttered by the Community of Israel when the Temple was built and the Ark entered into its place.' R. Hezekiah said: 'It is the Holy One, blessed be He, who utters this verse, applying it to the Community of Israel when the latter performs His will. For at such a time the Holy One, blessed be He, ascends His Throne of Glory, and has compassion on the world, and blessings and peace and love are there, so that He says: "This is my resting-place for ever", etc. Now, observe that once the artisans had begun the work of the Tabernacle, it veritably completed itself of its own accord. This we learn from the words, "Thus *was finished* all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting" (Ex. XXXIX, 32). The same happened in the creation of the world, of which it is likewise written: "And the heaven and the earth *were finished*" (Gen. II, 1). This, it is true, seems to conflict with the statement that "on the seventh day *God finished* his work which he had made" (*Ibid.* 2.) But the truth is, that although the several parts of the world completed themselves one by one, yet the world in its entirety was only completed and firmly established when the seventh day came. For then did the Holy One, blessed be He, with it knit together the world into a complete whole, so that it could be written, "And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made." It was the same with the building of the Temple. The artisans having begun their work, it showed them what was to be done, as it were, before their eyes; it was traced out in their sight, and it completed itself of its own accord.'[1] [223a]

AND BEZALEL, THE SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR. Tradition tells us that it was the Holy Spirit who made this announcement in the presence of Israel, proclaiming: "And Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the Lord commanded Moses." AND WITH

[1] *v.* Zohar, Gen. 74a.

HIM WAS OHOLIAB, THE SON OF AHISAMACH. From the expression, "and with him (*'itto*)", we learn that Oholiab never performed any work by himself, but always in association with Bezalel. Hence the words, "and with him", which proves that the left is always embraced within the right.

THESE ARE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TABERNACLE, EVEN THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY, AS THEY WERE RENDERED ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF MOSES, ETC. R. Jesse said: 'The wise men having completed the Tabernacle, it was requisite that an account should be rendered of all the parts of the work. For what reason? Because as the account of each work was rendered, so did that work become firmly established in its place. Furthermore, as the Israelites had found delight at first in their voluntary offerings, so were they delighted in the accounts being rendered; and thus their delight helped to the confirming of the work. Now, it is written "these" and not "and these", this signifying that this account eclipsed all previous accounts rendered in the world, and was destined to outlive them, being the one by which the Tabernacle was sustained.' R. Jesse further discoursed on the verse: "And there shall be faithfulness in thy times, strength of salvation, wisdom and knowledge, and the fear of the Lord which is his treasure" (Isa. XXXIII, 6). 'We have been taught', he said, 'that whoever devotes himself to the study of the Torah in this world, and is able to appoint set times for it, must do so in "faithfulness", must direct his mind toward the Holy One, blessed be He, must study for Heaven's sake. The words " strength of salvation" indicate that he must fuse Rigour with Mercy. "Wisdom and Knowledge" are two qualities which merge into one another. "The fear of the Lord is his treasure"; to wit, the treasure which contains the qualities just mentioned. For the fear of the Lord collects all those "brooks" (of wisdom), and so becomes the receptacle of all. And when these treasures issue from it they do so under a vigilant count-taking. That process is thus called "faithfulness", as explained. Verily, if herein faithfulness has to be manifested, how much more so in workaday matters! The Holy

One, blessed be He, therefore made the whole of Israel know the inwardness of faithfulness in all things that they performed.'

R. Jose and R. Isaac once were walking together when R. Jose remarked: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, indeed chose Bezalel from all Israel for the work of the Tabernacle. Why so?' R. Isaac replied: 'There is something in a name. It has been laid down that God has appointed certain names here on earth to be a crown to men and to enable them to achieve certain things.' R. Jose thereupon said: 'A more recondite explanation is as follows. Judah was of the "left side", but then attached himself to the "right side", and so the Tabernacle was begun from the "left side" and then was joined to the "right side", so that the whole was transformed into the "right". Reuben, on the other hand, began on the "right" but turned aside to the "left", and the other tribes of his company marched together with him, they also belonging to the "left". Hence Bezalel, who was of the tribe of Judah, and thus of the "right side", made the Tabernacle and completed it. As already said, the Holy One, blessed be He, took delight in him and chose him above all the rest [223*b*] for this work, and gave him wisdom and understanding and knowledge, inasmuch as he already was possessed of all wisdom of heart, as it is written: "and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom" (Ex. XXXI, 6). For the Holy One, blessed be He, does not grant wisdom save to him that already has wisdom.' R. Simeon said: 'The name Bezalel was emblematic, and he was called so in virtue of his wisdom; esoterically the name is composed of *b'ẓel-El* (in the Shadow of God). In the verse, "As an apple tree among the trees of the wood . . . under its shadow I delighted to sit" (S.S. II, 3), the words, "under its shadow" (*b'ẓilo*), are an allusion to Bezalel, who made the Tabernacle, which is a delightful place wherein to sit, for it gives delight to the Community of Israel, and the Community of Israel sits under the shadow of God. Hence, "And Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur", "the son of Uri" denoting one of the right, and "the son of Hur" one of the left. And so, through him, full atonement was made for the sin of the Golden Calf.

ALL THE GOLD THAT WAS MADE: that is to say, that was destined for the purpose long before. FOR THE WORK IN ALL THE HOLY WORK; indicating that gold had to be used in the working out of each separate grade, for the reason that completeness can only be reached through the working together of Severity and Mercy. Hence gold had to go into all the work connected with the Sanctuary.

R. Abba, R. Jose, and R. Hizkiah were once sitting together studying the Torah. Said R. Hizkiah to R. Abba: 'Since we see that the Holy One, blessed be He, finds delight in dealing out stern judgement, tempering mercy therewith, why, then, does He withhold it from sinners?' R. Abba answered: 'Many mountains have been uprooted[1] on this question. But the Sacred Lamp (R. Simeon) has revealed a number of truths in regard to this matter. Observe that the severity of judgement in which the Holy One, blessed be He, delights, is of the judgement fully clarified, the judgement that evokes clemency and gladness. But the sinners in this world are the embodiment of a judgement steeped in defilement, a judgement altogether displeasing to the Holy One, blessed be He. Hence He desires not to mingle holy judgement with defiled judgement until such time as the latter will be exterminated of itself and the sinner thus will be destroyed from the future world; by that very defiled judgement will he be destroyed from the world.' R. Abba illustrated from the verse: "When the wicked spring up as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do blossom; it is that they may be destroyed for ever" (Ps. XCII, 8). 'This verse', he said, 'apart from its more obvious meaning, is to be interpreted as follows. When the wicked spring up, it is but as grass, to wit, like grass that is withered in the parched soil, but revives somewhat at the approach of water, and like a felled tree that can still send forth twigs on either side, but can never regain its former foliage. So will the wicked be destroyed for ever and be altogether uprooted. There is this further truth underlying this verse. It is, that the Holy One, blessed be He, is long-suffering with the wicked in this

[1] Cf. the Talmudic phrase, "uprooter of mountains" = ingenious dialectician.

world, because this world is the portion of the "other side", whereas the world to come belongs to the side of holiness, is the portion of the righteous for them to abide therein adorned with the crown of the glory of their Master. These two sides are the counterparts of one another, the one [224a] the side of holiness, the other that of defilement; the one destined for the righteous, the other for the wicked. Happy are those righteous who have no portion in this world but only in the world to come. Observe that all is predisposed and revealed before the Holy One, blessed be He. Even so was it with Balak and Balaam: although the motive of their action[1] was not the glory of Heaven, yet was all they did duly recorded before the Lord, who did not diminish aught of their reward in this world. Thus, through the power of the forty-two offerings which they brought on the seven altars, Balak and Balaam obtained for the time being dominion over Israel, so that twenty and four thousand Israelites died by the plague besides those who were slain, as we read: "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them up unto the Lord in face of the sun. . . . Slay ye every one his men that have joined themselves unto the Baal of Peor" (Num. xxv, 4–5).'

R. Simeon said: 'Observe that the forty-two offerings brought by Balaam and Balak were offerings diverted from the "other side" towards the Holy One, blessed be He, and so the "other side", which is called "curse", had to be repaid these offerings from Israel. This is the inner implication of the verse, "And he (Elisha) looked behind him and saw them" (2 Kings II, 24). That is to say, "behind him", meaning the "other side", which stands behind the Shekinah. He turned "and saw them" (the children), as being meet for punishment; "and cursed them in the name of the Lord" (*Ibid.*), inducing the Divine Name, as it were, to discharge the debt owing to the "other side", for the latter's offerings which had been diverted to Him. Thus all is made right before the Holy One, blessed be He, and not a single act is lost, whether for good or for evil. Take again the act of David in fleeing from before Saul. That was the cause of all the priests of Nob being destroyed, with the sole

[1] Viz. the building of the altars and the offering of sacrifices.

exception of Abiathar, the son of Zadok, and this in turn was the cause of many evils that befell Israel. Through it Saul and his sons were killed, and many thousands and myriads fell in Israel. But all the time the punishment to be exacted for that sin was hanging over David, until all his descendants perished in one day, with the sole exception of Joash,[1] who was stolen away from among the slain. Yet was that sin against Nob still awaiting expiation, as indicated in the words: "There is still a day for a halt to be made at Nob" (Isa. x, 32). The same balancing of accounts is indicated in the words here, "All the gold ready-made (*he'asui*) for the work". What signifies the attribute "ready-made"? It signifies that God foresaw that the Israelites would give up their gold for the making of the Golden Calf, and so made them first give up their gold for the erection of the Tabernacle so as to make good the offering of the other gold. For had the Israelites still possessed all their gold at the time they made the Golden Calf, they would hardly have had to "break off the golden rings which were in their ears" (Ex. xxxii, 3). The offering of the gold for the Tabernacle was thus an atonement for the other gold.[2] Hence, "And Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah", of the side of royalty, "made all that the Lord commanded Moses". For all the craftsmanship of the Tabernacle was achieved through these two, Bezalel performing all the work, and Moses afterwards putting the finishing touch. Moses and Bezalel were both parts, as it were, of one whole, Moses being above and Bezalel underneath, since the end of the body is also part of the body.'

R. Jose gave a further exposition of the verse relating to Elisha which says: "And he went up from thence unto Beth-el; and as he was going up by the way, certain youths (*ne'arim*), little ones", etc. (2 Kings II, 23). 'The term *ne'arim* (youths)', he said, 'has been expounded to mean empty,[3] that is, empty of any words of the Torah and of any observance of the precepts of the Torah: "little ones", [224b] to wit, of little faith, and such as were doomed in this

[1] v. 2 Kings, xi, 1–2. [2] There is here a lacuna in the text. [3] The root, *N'R* has this meaning only in post-Biblical Hebrew.

world and in the world to come; "came forth out of the city" (*Ibid.*), that is, they abandoned the mystery of Divine Faith, the term "city" having the same implication here as in the passage, "and I will not enter the city" (Hos. XI, 9).[1] "And he looked behind him and saw them" (2 Kings II, 24); that is, he surveyed their future to see whether they would ever turn back from their evil ways, "and he saw them" as being such that were not ever to bring forth any good seed. Again, "and he saw them", that is, he recognized them as such as had been conceived on the night of the Day of Atonement;[2] straightway, therefore, "he cursed them in the name of the Lord" (*Ibid.*). Further, "And he turned behind him" signifies that having surveyed them in order to find out whether he would be punished for their sake or not, "he turned behind him", in other words, he found himself turned away and removed from such punishment. Parallel to it is the passage, "and Aaron turned" (Num. XII, 10), signifying that Aaron was turned away and shielded from Miriam's leprosy; "and he saw them", as being destined to perpetrate much evil in Israel. "And he turned behind him" further signifies that he turned his gaze behind the Shekinah, as it says of Lot's wife that she "looked back from behind him" (Gen. XIX, 26), meaning "from behind the Shekinah". Thus Elisha looked behind the Shekinah and discerned that their mothers had conceived them all on the night that presides over the atonement of the sins of Israel. Straightway "he cursed them in the name of the Lord". "And there came forth two bears" (2 Kings II, 24)—she bears, as indicated by the feminine numeral *sh'tayim*, big with offspring, "and tare forty and two children of them" (*Ibid.*), in correspondence, as has been explained, to the number of offerings brought by Balak.

'EVEN THE GOLD OF WAVING WAS. Why is the gold characterized as that of "waving"; and why is the silver not so characterized, although the brass is, as it says, "the brass of waving"? The reason is that "waving" signifies "rising

[1] Al. the Divine Faith, which is called "city", as in the passage, "in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God" (Ps. XLVIII, 9).
[2] When marital relations are forbidden.

upward", and thus distinguishes this gold from the lower and inferior gold. For all the grades and Chariots are of the superior plane, symbolized by the "gold of waving", and this same gold, the further it extends downwards the more it loses in colour, in virtue, and in brilliancy. Whilst in the heights above it is goodly gold in the mystery of its brilliancy, below it is the dross of itself and its refuse. No so the silver, of which it is simply written, "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation". For silver retains its virtues, even in its extension downwards, although it does not remain in the same excellence; whereas gold, in its extension downwards, becomes coarser and coarser.[1] Hence the one had to be waved and raised to the heights, whilst the other had to be extended downwards and into all directions, since it retains its excellence everywhere.'

R. Jose then continued to discourse, citing the verse: "For the Lord God (*YHVH ELOHIM*) is a sun and a shield; the Lord giveth grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. LXXXIV, 12). 'The "sun", he said, 'contains the mystery of the Divine Name *YHVH*, wherein is the abode of rest of all the grades, whereas "shield" contains the mystery of the Divine Name *ELOHIM;* the same is indicated in "I am thy shield" (Gen. XV, 1). The two together, sun and shield, constitute thus the mystery of the Divine Name complete: "the Lord giveth grace and glory", so that the whole should merge into a unity. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly". This is in antithesis to the passage saying, "But from the wicked their light is withholden" (Job XXXVIII, 15), and is an allusion to the primordial light, of which it is written, "And God saw the light that it was good" (Gen. I, 4), and so the Holy One, blessed be He, put it away and stored it up, as already said. He treasured it up and withdrew it so that the wicked may not enjoy it, neither

[1] Gold, in the cabbalistic doctrine, is symbolic of Rigour, or Judgement, which in the higher regions exists in its purity, whilst the more it descends the more it is mingled with the dross of evil, sin, the "other side", or the evil Accuser, etc. But silver is symbolic of Mercy, which is not changed by its descent.

in this world nor in the world to come. As for the righteous, "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly", alluding to that primordial light which "God saw that it was good". Thus that light needed not to ascend and be raised aloft, but only to be disclosed and extended, unlike the other, which is of the "left". This accounts for the one being characterized by "of the waving" and not the other. Hence it simply says: "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was a hundred talents."

'Observe this. The "right side" is ever present in the world to sustain it, and to afford it light [225a] and blessing. Hence the priest, inasmuch as he is of the "right side", is always in readiness to bless the people. For it is from the "right side" that all the blessings of the world do spring, and the priest takes by right the first share. The priest has thus been assigned to bless both the upper world and the lower. Observe that when the priest spreads his hands at the time he blesses the people, the Shekinah comes and hovers over him and endows him with power.[1] When blessing, the priest raises his right hand above the left, so as to cause the right to prevail over the left. All the grades over which he spreads his hands are thus blessed from the source of all things, from the well called "Righteous". The source of all is the "future world", the sublime source which illumines all faces, whence are kindled all lamps. It has a counterpart in the source and spring of the well whence all the lower lamps and the lower lights are kindled and radiate. So one corresponds to the other. Hence, when the priest spreads out his hands and begins to pronounce the blessing over the people, the celestial benedictions flowing from the celestial source at once kindle the lamps, all faces are illumined, and the Community of Israel is adorned with celestial crowns, and all those blessings flow down from on high to below.

'Observe, then, that Moses gave the instructions and Bezalel carried them out, the two being in the esoterical relation of body and final part of body, which is the holy covenant symbol. The Tabernacle was thereby made the centre of the increase of Love and Unity. And the whole was

[1] Lit. fills his hands.

performed in the mystery of the "right side". Hence, wherever the "right side" dominates the Evil Eye has no power. We thus read, "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation."[1] For that silver came from the right, and so all and everything were taken count of and numbered.'

R. Isaac put the following question to R. Simeon: 'Seeing that, as we have learnt, no blessing dwells in whatever is numbered or measured, why were all things connected with the Tabernacle made to be numbered?' R. Simeon replied: 'Wherever holiness abides, there, if the act of numbering proceeds from the side of holiness, blessing will abide continuously, and not pass away. This we learn from the tithe, which is a cause of blessing, the reason being that the act of counting is performed for a sacred purpose. How much more so, then, should that be with the Tabernacle, which was a sacred edifice and derived from the side of holiness! But it is not so with worldly matters, such as are not derived from the side of holiness; no blessing rests upon them if they are numbered. For then the "other side", that is, the Evil Eye, may obtain dominion over them; and wherever the Evil Eye rules there blessings cannot reach. Contrariwise, in holy affairs, through measuring and numbering blessings continuously increase. Hence, "And the silver of them that were counted of the congregation"; indeed, "counted", without fear of the Evil Eye, without fear of any evil consequences, as the blessings from above rested there upon all. Observe, likewise, that no evil eye had any power over the seed of Joseph, for the reason that Joseph came from the "right side", and this was the reason that the Tabernacle was made by Bezalel, who belonged to the same grade as Joseph, the grade exhibited in the purity of the holy covenant symbol.'

R. Abba and R. Aha and R. Jose were walking on the way from Tiberias to Sepphoris, when they caught sight of R. Eleazar, who was coming up in the company of R. Hiya. Said R. Abba: 'Truly, we are now going to have the company

[1] The Zohar seems to construe this phrase as: "the numbered silver of the congregation."

of the Shekinah.' They waited for them until they came up with them. Then R. Eleazar cited the verse: "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Ps. XXXIV, 16). 'This verse', he said, 'presents a difficulty. It cannot mean that God's providence cares for the righteous for to endow them with the goods of this world, since, indeed, we see so many righteous in this world who cannot procure even so much sustenance as would satisfy the ravens of the air. [225b] But there is a recondite meaning here. Observe that all beings of this world are known in the upper world, either to one side or to the other side. Those of the side of holiness are known to that side, whose watchful providence is ever towards them. Similarly those belonging to the side of defilement are known to that side, being under its continuous care. Now, when a man is under the care of the side of holiness, the "other side" will never come near him and is powerless to thrust him out of his place, or of whatever he is doing. Thus, "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous", etc., so that the "other side" is powerless to obtain rule over him. Now,' concluded R. Eleazar, 'the support of heaven is here with us, we are watched over from on high, and no power from the "other side", no evil thing, can rule over you.' Said R. Abba: 'Behold, we have learned that wherever the holy side hovers, there, despite its association with any act of numbering, blessings will never cease.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Assuredly it is so.' 'Now', rejoined R. Abba, 'behold, Israel is holy and comes from the side of holiness, as we read: "Israel is the Lord's hallowed portion" (Jer. II, 3); also, "ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. XIX, 2). Why, then, when David took a census of Israel did death rage among the people, as Scripture says: "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed" (2 Sam. XXII, 15)?' R. Eleazar said in reply: 'This was because he did not take from them shekels as a ransom in accordance with the injunction, "then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; and there be no plague among them when thou numberest them" (Ex. XXX, 12). For that which is holy should give a holy ransom, and that

holy ransom was not taken from them at the time. Observe that Israel is holy and not meet for numbering, and hence a ransom had to be taken from them, and this could be numbered whilst they themselves were not to be numbered. For holiness is the essence of the highest of grades; and just as to that highest degree of holiness there is attached a lower degree[1] that admits of number and computation, so Israel, "the Lord's hallowed portion", have to give as ransom something of another degree of holiness, that admits of computation. Esoterically speaking, Israel is the tree that stands in the innermost. The ransom is of another kind of holiness, standing outside and admitting of computation. The latter is thus a shield to the former.'

The company then pursued their journey, and R. Eleazar began to discourse on the verse: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered" (Hos. II, 1). 'The comparison to the sand of the sea', he said, 'is of a twofold aspect. First, just as when the sea rages and its waves hurl themselves forward to overwhelm the world, so soon as they encounter the sand of the shore their force is broken and they recede and rage no more, so the nations rage and fume and seek to overwhelm and flood the world; but when they behold Israel in close attachment to the Holy One, blessed be He, they recede, broken and powerless. Again, as the sand of the sea cannot be numbered or measured, so is Israel. Observe that there is somewhere a measuring hidden away and undisclosed, and similarly a hidden and undisclosed numbering, that measuring and that numbering upholding the upper world and the lower just because the basis of that measuring and of that numbering is beyond anyone's knowledge. This constitutes the all-in-all Divine Faith. Now, Israel on earth does not fall within the scope of number save through the side of something extraneous to themselves; thus it is their ransom that falls within the scope of number. Hence, when Israel are about to be numbered, [226a] a ransom has to be taken from them, as already said. Thus, when David took a census of Israel without having

[1] *Malkuth.*

taken from them a ransom, wrath was provoked and there perished of Israel many hosts and legions. This, then, is the significance of the words, "And the silver of them that were counted of the congregation . . . for every one that passed over to them that are numbered". It was all consecrated to the work of the Tabernacle. It has been stated that the talents represented one category of number, whilst the shekels represented another category. For there are higher existences who come within a superior kind of number; and there are others who belong to a lower kind.'

R. Eleazar further discoursed on the verse; "A song of ascents; of Solomon. Except the Lord build the house, thy labour is in vain", etc. (Ps. CXXVII, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'was uttered by Solomon at the time when, having begun to build the Temple he became aware that the work proceeded of itself, as it were, in the hands of the labourers. "Except the Lord", he thus said, "build the house", etc. This alludes to the statement that "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (Gen. 1, 1), and tells us that the Holy One, blessed be He, created and garnished this world and fitted it out with all its requirements, thus making it a House. "They labour in vain that build it": this alludes to the streams that come forth and enter the House in order to furnish it with all its needs; try as they may, yet except the Lord of the supernal world make the House and put it in proper order, they labour in vain. "Except the Lord keep the city", etc. (*Ibid.*). This is in harmony with the verse: "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. XI, 12), indicating the providence by which it is guarded on all sides. And though it is also written, "Behold, it is the couch of Solomon; threescore mighty men are about it" (S.S. III, 7), all guarding it, this is "because of dread in the night" (*Ibid.* 8), to wit, the dread of Gehinnom that confronts it and tries to annihilate it. All thus are standing guard round about it.[1] When the Thought is illumined, it remains undisclosed and unknowable, but it forms a centre of energies and of expansion in all directions.

[1] The text here repeats the passage from Zohar, Genesis, 65*a*, commencing, "That unknowable light" to "is called *En-Sof*".

One outcome of that expansion is the Supernal World, the world of interrogation, as it were, or of the Supreme Utterance, the world called "Who ?", alluded to in "Lift up your eyes on high, and see: Who hath created these ?", or in other words, the creative utterance, the Who ?, created *these;* but subsequently it expanded and became the sea, symbolic of the lowest grade, and created a lower world after the pattern of the [226*b*] upper, the two being the counterparts of each other. Hence the guarding of the universe is from above downwards, that is, from the upper world which was formed by the expansion of the Thought. We thus understand the meaning of the passage, saying, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth in vain", "the watchman" referring to the watchman of Israel,[1] since protection depends not on him but on the higher world. Note that the blue employed in the work of the Tabernacle symbolized the mystery of the upper world, the blue and the purple together symbolized the knitting together of the upper world and the lower.

AND OF THE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY AND FIVE SHEKELS HE MADE HOOKS FOR THE PILLARS, AND OVERLAID THEIR CAPITALS, ETC. We have learned that these shekels escaped the memory of Moses, and he could not recall what use he had made of them until a Voice went forth and declared: "And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars", etc. In this connection, R. Hizkiah began a discourse on the verse: "While the king sat at his table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance" (S.S. I, 12). 'This', he said, 'is an allusion to the Holy One, blessed be He, at the time when He gave the Torah to Israel, when He came to Sinai accompanied by multitudes of holy legions and all the supernal holy beings. The Torah was then given in the midst of flaming fire, itself being written in white fire upon black fire, the letters floating aloft in the air. The first letter of the Torah divided itself into seven hundred and seventy-five parts facing in all directions, all of which were visible aloft in the air within

[1] i.e. Metatron, the chief of the angels.

the letter *Vau*, the letter which was traced out on every side of the world. These *Vaus* were upheld by pillars and the pillars were suspended by a miracle with all the *Vaus* on top of them. For the essence of the Torah is based on the *Vau*, and these *Vaus*, which constitute the mystery of the faith of the Torah, are all based on those pillars, which constitute in their turn the mysteries of the books of the Prophets. The supreme *Vau* is symbolic of the audible Voice, symbolic of the foundation of the Torah, for the Torah emerged from that inner Voice, called Great Voice, of which we read: "These words the Lord spake, etc., with a great voice, and it went on no more" (Deut. v, 22). Observe that that Great Voice is the root of all things, and is the essence of the Holy Divine Name. It is for this reason that it has been laid down that a man may not greet his friend before he has recited his prayer. This is the recondite significance of the verse: "He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him" (Prov. xxvii, 14); the prohibition only applies to a blessing that is joined with that which is emblematic of the "great voice", which is the main part of the Divine Name. The mystery of the Torah proceeds, then, from the Great Voice, which is identical with "the King", and "whilst the King sat at His table" alludes to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. "My spikenard sent forth [227*a*] its fragrance" refers to the Community of Israel, who said: "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and obey" (Ex. xxiv, 7); by "the King" is meant the Most High King, as expounded.

'When the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to bring a flood on the world in order to destroy all flesh, He said to Noah: "It behoves thee to hide thyself, and not to be seen by the Destroyer lest he obtain dominion over thee and none will be able to shield thee." Subsequently, when the sacrifices brought by Noah were offered up, a fragrance was diffused in the world; but not so sweet as when, later on, Israel stood at Mount Sinai. Then the world was truly filled with a fragrance, and thus the Destroyer was no more to be seen. Indeed, the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to remove altogether the Destroyer from the world, when Israel, after

the lapse of only a few days, committed a sin in making the Golden Calf; thus Scripture says: "And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb" (Ex. xxxiii, 6), "their ornaments" signifying the mysteries of the Divine Name with which the Holy One adorned them, but which were now removed from them. The Destroyer thus regained power over the world, inflicting punishment over it, as before.' R. Jose said: 'At the flood, what was there for the Destroyer to do, seeing that it was the waters that prevailed? The fact is that no punishment is ever meted out to the world but the Destroyer is in the midst of it all, busying himself among the judgements executed. Likewise here, while the flood wrought havoc, the Destroyer went about in its midst, and indeed "Flood" was his name. The Holy One, blessed be He, thus admonished Noah to hide himself and not let himself be seen.'

AND OF THE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY AND FIVE SHEKELS HE MADE HOOKS (*vavim*) FOR THE PILLARS. R. Eleazar said: 'Why *vavim* (lit. *Vaus*)? Because the pillars were in the shape of the letter *vau;* the pillars were of silver, but their capitals were overlaid with gold. For every *Vau* is of the side of Mercy, and these were all known on high by number; and it is because they belonged to the side of Mercy that they are called *Vavim* (*Vaus*); and all besides depended on them. Now each *Vau* (*vau*-shaped pillar) consisted of both gold and silver (symbolic of Rigour and Mercy), and they were called "pillars", for the reason that they stood outside and underneath the Body.' Said R. Isaac: 'I was in doubt whether the work referred to in our verse was sacred or profane; for, indeed, there is ground for thinking that it speaks here of profane work from the occurrence of the word "thousand", which in the analogous passage, "Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand" (S.S. viii, 12), undoubtedly speaks of mundane things.' R. Eleazar said in reply: 'Not so. If these shekels were profane, no *Vavim* (*vau*-shaped pillars) would have been made of them. Further (in the Song of Songs), it only mentions "the thousand", no more, whereas here it is written: "the thousand seven hundred

seventy and five". Now, what is profane has no share in the side of holiness, but belongs entirely to the "other side", to that of impurity. Thereon is based the separation (*habdalah*) which we have to make between the holy and the profane. Yet, for all that and despite their separateness, the holy contains a particle [227*b*] of the "left side". Thus, "Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand", signifies the thousand days of unholiness, to wit, the days of Exile (*galuth*). A thousand days there are of holiness, and, correspondingly, a thousand days of the "other side". The Companions have thus in regard to this remarked that the days of Exile alluded to are a thousand years; and although Israel may continue in exile longer than a thousand years, yet that will only be an extension of those thousand years designated by the term "thousand days". Hence it has been declared that the term Solomon (*Sh'lama* = possessor of peace), in the whole of the Song of Songs, is divine, with the exception of this one which is profane. Now, "the thousand", in reference to the Tabernacle, alludes to things holy, all the works of the Tabernacle being holy; hence of these *shekalim* "he made hooks for the pillars". Observe that it has been laid down that the letter *vau*, as we have stated elsewhere, symbolizes Mercy, and so wherever it is joined to the Divine Name it indicates an exercise of Mercy. We read, for instance, "And the Lord (*V-YHVH*) caused to rain upon Sodom" (Gen. XIX, 24), preceded by, "And the Lord (*V-YHVH*) said, Shall I hide from Abraham . . . ?" (*Ibid.* XVIII, 17), indicating an exercise of Mercy and Rigour at one and the same time. This explains why, in the account of the Flood, the name *Elohim* (God) is used throughout, but never "and the Lord" (*V-YHVH*).[1]

'It is written, "While the king sat at his table"; to wit, in the blissful company of Upper Paradise, which receives its plenitude of beatitudes by an undisclosed channel, and then distributes it into certain brooks; "My spikenard sent forth its fragrance" is an allusion to the hinder sea, which created the lower world after the pattern of the upper, so that a sweet

[1] The text here repeats the passage from Zohar, Genesis, 64*b*, commencing: "We have been taught that the term" to "evil of eye".

savour of the upper world was diffused and a supernal light radiated throughout. Observe that when the fragrance of that spikenard is wafted on high, it is accompanied by an embrace of love, and the spikenard ascends to attach itself above; and all the sacred Chariots emit a fragrance that is woven into a crown for their adornment. Those sacred Chariots are called "maidens of song", alluded to in "upon *Alamoth* (maidens) of song" (Ps. XLVI, 1), as well as in "and maidens without number". Of the same is written: "Is there any number of his armies" (Job XXV, 3).

HOOKS (*vau*-shaped tops) FOR THE PILLARS. The *vau* is symbolic of the male principle. All that exists and ascends with the dignity of anointing on high is of the male principle, which is typified by the *vau*, the symbol of heaven, which is male; whereas all below are called female. Hence all that proceed from the "left side" are of the side of the female; and it is they who have been appointed to preside over song, and continuously intone chants. This is indicated in "upon the *Alamoth* (maidens) of song". These come under the mystic symbolism of the letter *hé*, and they bring forth many hosts after their kind through the mystic symbolism of the letter *vau*, the letter symbolic of the male principle upon whom falls the task of providing food for the female. Hence all those *vavim* (*vaus*) that Bezalel made over the pillars that represented the female principle. These spring from the mystery of the number thousand, which is a complete number, as well as seven hundred, also a complete number, and, further, from the number five and from seventy, all of which represent together one mystery. Thus, out of that mystery, and that number, he made the *vavim* (*vaus*); so all was made with a deep symbolism, and according to a certain calculation.' [228*a*]

AND THE BRASS OF THE WAVING WAS SEVENTY TALENTS. Said R. Judah: 'All this descends here below in the supernal image, containing the mystery of Faith. To the same pattern did Nebuchadnezzar make the image that he erected.' R. Jose said: 'It was not the image he made that

was after the same pattern, but the image that he saw in his dream, an image made of gold, of silver and brass. Now, iron and clay were not worthy to enter into the work of the Tabernacle, but only those three metals. There is a recondite significance in the triad of metals. There were other materials that formed into tetrads, as the four fabrics consisting of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, or the four rows of stones (in the breastplate).' R. Judah said: 'Some of them formed into threes, some into fours, some into twos, and again others were kept single. Nevertheless, an Order proper consists of a triad.[1] [228b]

'The world is divided between forty-five varieties of light, seven of which are assigned to the seven abysses. Each light impinges on its Abyss, where there is a great rolling of stones, and penetrates into and pierces those stones so that water issues from them. The light impinges on the four sides of the Abyss, and then each light becomes entwined with the next and they join together and divide the waters, and all the seven lights overwhelm the seven Abysses, and hover over the darkness of the Abysses so that the light and darkness intermingle. Then the waters rush up and down, and there is a fusion of light and darkness and waters, from which emerge lights in which darkness is not intermingled. The lights then impinge on each other, with the result that they split into seventy-five channels of the Abyss along which waters course. Each channel roars with a sound peculiar to itself, so that there is a quivering of all the Abysses. At the sound of the roaring each Abyss calls to its neighbour, saying: "Divide thy waters". Thus Scripture says: "Deep calleth unto deep at the voice of thy cataracts" (Ps. XLII, 8). Underneath these there are the three hundred and sixty-five veins, some white, some black, some red, all of which intertwine and fuse into one colour. These veins are woven into seventeen nets, each of which is called a net of veins, and descend to the nethermost parts of the Abyss. Underneath these there are two nets of the appearance of iron and another two nets of the appearance of brass. Over

[1] The text here repeats the passage from Zohar, Gen., 159a, commencing: "There are three orders" to "perfect unity" [159b].

above them there are two thrones, one on the right and one on the left. All these nets join into one, and water flows from these channels and enters the nets. As for the two thrones, one is the throne of the black firmament and the other of the variegated firmament. When the nets ascend, they go by the way of the throne of the black firmament, and when they descend they go by the way of the throne of the variegated firmament. The throne of the black firmament is on the right, and the throne of the variegated firmament is on the left. When the nets ascend by the throne of the black firmament, the throne of the firmament of the left lowers itself, and they descend by it, as the two thrones balance one another. Thus all the nets descend by means of them and enter into the nethermost parts of the Abyss. Then one of the thrones rises above all the Abysses and the other throne lowers itself underneath all the Abysses. [229a] Between these two thrones whirl themselves all the Abysses, and all those channels are fixed between these two thrones. There are seventy-five channels, seven of which are higher than the rest, which, however, are attached to them, and all of them pass through the wheels of the two thrones on either side. Their waters course upwards and downwards. The downward-coursing waters form caves in the Abysses and cleave them asunder, while the upward-coursing waters enter into the caverns of the stones and continue rising until they fill them, which happens once in seven years. So far the seven varieties of lights with their profound symbolism.

'The "brass of waving", previously mentioned, represents the so-called "Brass-Mountains", and the "sockets of brass" represent the gates through which entrance is made to the King. Now of that brass were made all the ministering vessels of the altar. They are, indeed, ministers to the altar, because when the souls of men come up on the altar it is they that execute the service of the altar, and help it to perform its function, and hence they are named "vessels of the altar". All those "pins of the Tabernacle", and vessels, are specified by name as vessels of service, to serve in the Sanctuary. Hence they all stand as appointed chieftains and Chariot legions and heavenly spirits, each in its rank. They

are, moreover, all numbered, their numbers being kept within certain Sacred Palaces. There is an interaction of gold and gold, silver and silver, brass and brass. The brass here below derives its power from the supernal brass, and so with the rest. Besides, all those varieties are interfused with each other, the clasps of gold binding together the curtains, the clasps of brass binding the Tabernacle, all being ranged opposite each other. Moreover, the clasps scintillated in the Tabernacle as the stars scintillate in the firmament, the fifty golden clasps and the fifty brazen clasps in rows facing each other. Also, out of the supernal light there was emitted a spark which penetrated within a dark speculum, that spark being a fusion of all colours of light and called "purple" (*argaman*). Then that "purple" impinged on that non-luminous light, causing it to emit another dull spark. The two were fused, and out of the fusion were formed the sacred robes in which Michael the High Priest was attired. When thus attired in these robes of glory he enters to minister in the Sanctuary, but not otherwise, just as we read of Moses that he "entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount" (Ex. XXIV, 18). We have learnt that Moses had first to attire himself in the cloud as in a robe, and only then could he go up into the mount, not otherwise. So the High Priest could not enter the Sanctuary unless robed in the priestly garments. And it is because they are emanations of the supernal mysteries, and are made after the supernal pattern, that they are called "residual garments" (*bigde ha-s'rad*), inasmuch as they were made of what has been left over of the supernal robes, of the residue of the ethereal celestial splendours, of the "blue" and "purple", the hues of the mystery of the Divine Name, called the Name Perfect, to wit, *YHVH ELOHIM*, as also of "scarlet red", thus comprising the colours, red, blue, and purple. Only thus clad could he enter into the innermost without being thrust out. All was made with a mystic significance, so that all things should bear the supernal pattern. Hence it is written: "The residual garments for ministering in the holy place" (*Ibid.* XXXIX, 41), for it is only when the supernal colours reside in them that Scripture says of them, "the holy garments [229*b*] are they" (Lev.

XVI, 4.) Of Israel, also, Scripture says: "Israel is the Lord's hallowed portion, the first-fruits of the increase" (Jer. II, 3), thus calling Israel holy, for the reason that in Israel are to be seen all shades of colour, as displayed by Priests, Levites, and Israelites; and these are the colours which may be exhibited in the inner holy place.

'Observe that man's soul does not ascend to appear before the Holy King unless she is first worthy to be attired in the supernal raiment. Likewise, the soul does not descend into this world until clad in the garments of this world. Similarly, the holy heavenly angels, of whom it is written, "Who makest thy angels into winds and thy ministers into flaming fire" (Ps. CIV, 4), when they have to execute a message in this world do not come down to it before they clothe themselves in the garments of this world. The attire thus has always to be in harmony with the place visited; and the soul, as we have said, can only ascend when clad in ethereal raiment. Adam in the Garden of Eden was attired in supernal raiment, of celestial radiancy. As soon as he was driven from the Garden of Eden and had need of forms suited to this world, "the Lord God", Scripture says, "made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin (*'or*), and clothed them" (Gen. III, 21). Formerly they were garments of light (*'or*), to wit, of the celestial light in which Adam ministered in the Garden of Eden. For, inasmuch as it is the resplendency of the celestial light that ministers in the Garden of Eden, when first man entered into the Garden, the Holy One, blessed be He, clothed him first in the raiment of that light. Otherwise he could not have entered there. When driven out, however, he had need of other garments; hence "garments of skin". So here also "they made residual garments to minister in the holy place", so as to enable the wearer to enter the Sanctuary. Now, it has been already taught that a man's good deeds done in this world draw from the celestial resplendency of light a garment with which he may be invested when in the next world he comes to appear before the Holy One, blessed be He. Apparelled in that raiment, he is in a state of bliss and feasts his eyes on the radiant effulgence. So Scripture says: "To behold the graciousness of the Lord, and to visit

early in his temple" (Ps. XXVII, 4). Man's soul is thus attired in the raiments of both worlds, the lower and the upper, thereby achieving perfection. Of this Scripture says: "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name"; to wit, in this world—"The upright shall dwell in thy presence" (*Ibid.* CXL, 14); namely, in the other world.'

AND HE MADE THE EPHOD OF GOLD. Said R. Jose: 'The ephod and the breastplate were inseparable, and we have laid down that in that place are fixed the twelve stones which bear the names of the twelve sons of Israel, to which, in their turn, correspond to the twelve supernal divisions.[1] This recondite symbolism underlies the passage, "Whither the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, as a testimony unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Ps. CXXII, 4). The reference here is to the twelve supernal tribes, they being the tribes of *YH* (the Lord), a name that is a testimony to Israel.' R. Hiya said: 'The term "tribes" is repeated here twice: first in allusion to the tribes here on earth, and secondly the supernal Tribes. "A testimony to Israel" bears esoteric reference to the supreme Divine Name that is called "testimony", of which Scripture says, "and my testimony that I shall teach them" (*Ibid.* CXXXII, 12). Now, these supernal twelve holy tribes were symbolized by the twelve sacred stones. For the twelve tribes below were the counterpart of those on high, and their names were all engraven on those stones, so that they were carried by the High Priest. When Jacob was on his way to Haran, Scripture says of him, "and he took some of the stones of the place, and put them under his head" (Gen. XXVIII, 11). These were the twelve sacred stones, which were made into one, as we read later, "and *this* stone" (*Ibid.* 22). All the twelve stones were absorbed in the one supreme sacred stone that is over them all, of which it is thus written, "and this stone [230a] which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house" (*Ibid.*). Hence the High Priest had to put them on his heart as a perpetual reminder of them, as Scripture says: "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel . . . upon

[1] The permutations of the letters of the Tetragrammaton.

his heart . . . for a memorial before the Lord continually" (Ex. XXVIII, 29). In all this the number twelve is of recondite significance: there are twelve stones of a supernal order in the upper world, concealed in a profound and holy mystery. These form the essence of the Torah; proceeding from a small, still voice,[1] as said elsewhere. There is an order of another twelve hidden in a lower world,[2] after the pattern of the former, but which proceed from a different voice, designated Stone, as hinted in the words "from thence, from the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (*Ibid.* XLIX, 24). This is also the inner significance of the verse: "And thither were all the flocks gathered, and they rolled the stone . . . and put the stone again . . . in its place" (*Ibid.* XIX, 3). By the "stone" here is meant the Shekinah, called "tried stone", "the stone of Israel", which Israel roll along and take with them into exile, "and then put the stone again in its place". And so, after the name of the Shekinah all Israel are termed "stones". There are, moreover, stones and stones. There are stones which form the foundation of a house, of which Scripture says, "And the king commanded, and they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with hewn stone" (1 Kings V, 31); and there are precious supernal stones, to wit, those twelve stones. These are ranged in four orders, of three each, toward the four directions of the world. After the same pattern was the arrangement of the standards in the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness, where the twelve tribes were formed into groups of three each on each of the four cardinal points. Observe that when the High Priest was wearing the twelve stones fixed on the breastplate and the ephod, the Shekinah hovered over him. These twelve stones had engraved on them the names of the twelve tribes, each stone bearing the name of one of them. The letters were sunk, but when the stones shone they stood out and became luminous, spelling out what was required. Now, in all the names of the tribes the letters *ḥeth* and *teth* were not to be found, for the reason that the tribes were without sin (*Ḥe'Ṭ*).' Said R. Hezekiah: 'This is reasonable as regards the *ḥeth*, but not so in regard to the *teth*, since it is the initial of *tob*

[1] *Binah.* [2] The world of Creation.

(good); and, further, we have learned that the letter *teth* seen in a dream is a good omen, since at the beginning of the Torah it is written, "And the Lord saw the light that it was good" (Gen. 1, 4). Why, then, is that letter absent from the names of the tribes?' R. Hiya said in reply: 'It is because these two letters adjoin each other (in the alphabet), and, further, the *teth* is a letter hidden and withdrawn, as it is symbolic of the light that is above other lights, of the light of which it is written, "And the Lord saw the light that it was good". Hence it is the light of all the tribes together, and it could not be engraven on any of them. And, in addition, all the twelve tribes sprang from a certain undisclosed Apartment which is symbolized by the letter *teth*, and so, symbolizing as it does the undisclosed, this letter could not be made to be seen among them. Observe that all those stones possessed miraculous powers. Thus, when they became luminous, the face of the High Priest was likewise illumined, and at the same time the luminous letters stood out. The shining of the High Priest's face was a sign for all that the luminous letters were of a favourable significance; thereby it was known whether the High Priest was righteous or not.'

R. Abba was a frequent visitor to R. Simeon. He said to him once: 'In regard to the Urim and Thummim which were to be put in the breastplate (Ex. XXVIII, 30), we have learned that they were called Urim (=lights) because their words gave a clear and direct answer to the questions directed to them; and Thummim (*tamim*=perfect, complete) because their words were fulfilled to perfection.[1] Now, there seems to be something further to know in regard to this recondite subject.' Said R. Simeon: 'Assuredly so. Thus, the breastplate and the ephod correspond to the Urim and Thummim, and these again to the phylacteries (*tefillin*) and the knot of the phylacteries.' R. Simeon here cited the verse: "And thou shalt see my back, but my face shall not be seen" (*Ibid.* XXXIII, 23). 'That means', he said, 'that the Holy One, blessed be He, made Moses see the knot of the phylacteries,[2] but not the phylacteries themselves. "My face" points to the

[1] v. T. B. Yoma, 73. [2] v. T. B. Menahoth, 35.

phylacteries that contain the sublime mystery of the Divine Name, [230b] whereas "my back" involves the mystery contained in the knot of the phylacteries. As is well known to the Companions, the former denotes the shining speculum, the latter the dull speculum. So correspondingly Urim signifies the words illuminated, whereas Thummim points to the words in their fulfilment. The same mystical correlation is found between "voice" and "speech": for voice illumines the speech to be uttered, whereas speech brings the word to completion, and the two are indissolubly fused one with each other. The breastplate and the ephod', he concluded, 'correspond thus respectively to the "face" and the "back", the two being one and inseparable.' Said R. Abba: 'If that is so, and if he who separates them is called "one who separateth between familiar friends" (Prov. XVI, 28), how are we to explain the verse: "And it came to pass, when Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand" (1 Sam. XXIII, 6), where the ephod is mentioned without the breastplate?' R. Simeon replied: 'The explanation assuredly is that the nearer a thing comes to the realm of the hidden and undisclosed, the less is it made mention of. So, contrariwise, what is nearer the realm of things revealed is to that degree more often mentioned, whereby the undisclosed is all the more covered, as it were. On the same principle, the Divine Name Sublime, the essence of the hidden and unrevealed, is never uttered, a name denoting the revealed being substituted for it. Thus the Name signifying the unrevealed is *YHVH*, but that signifying the revealed is *ADNY* (*ADoNaY*). The former is the way the Divine Name is written, the latter the way it is read. Thus it is throughout the Torah, which contains two sides: a disclosed and an undisclosed. And these two aspects are found in all things, both in this world and in the upper world.'

R. Simeon here adduced the verse: "Then said they unto him: Tell us, we pray thee, inasmuch as (*ba'asher*) thou art the cause that this evil is upon us, what is thine occupation? . . Then the men feared God exceedingly . . ." (Jonah 1, 8–16). 'There is much', he said, 'to ponder over

in this text. For, indeed, the men put to him their question with deep wisdom. Thus they wished to find out whether Jonah was of the seed of Joseph, at the sight of whose coffin the sea straightway divided itself and became dry land. So Scripture says: "The sea saw and fled" (Ps. CXIV, 3); that is, it saw him of whom it is written, "and he fled and got him out" (Gen. XXXIX, 12), and at once "the Jordan turned backward" (Ps. *Ibid.*). The men thus used the expression "inasmuch as" (*ba'asher*), thereby pointing to Joseph, who used a similar expression when he said, "inasmuch as thou art his wife" (Gen. XXXIX, 9); they thus said in effect, "If thou art of the seed of Joseph, pray that the sea may cease from its raging." They further used the expression "to whom?" (*l'mi*), an allusion to Jacob, in connection with whom it is written, "to whom belongest thou?" (*Ibid.* XXII, 17); they as much as said: "If thou art of the seed of Jacob who sent his message to Esau by holy angel messengers and in that way was saved from the calamity that threatened him, then pray to the Master that He may send His angel to save us from this calamity that threatens us, and if not"—they further asked—"What is thine occupation?" With what dost thou daily busy thyself? "and whence comest thou?" that is, Who were thy forefathers? "What is thy country?" Is it a country deserving punishment? Thus all the questions put by them had a good reason. "And he said unto them: I am a Hebrew, that is, from the seed of Abraham the Hebrew who sanctified the name of his master day by day; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven", etc. They put their questions, cloaking their real meaning, but he answered them without disguise. Scripture then continues: "Then were the men exceedingly afraid." It was the Divine Name they heard that made them fear; for they all were aware of the miracles and mighty deeds that the Holy One, blessed be He, wrought on the sea. He further told them that he fled from the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, and they thus asked him: "What is this that thou hast done?" that is, Why hast thou transgressed thy Master's command? Note that all these men, after they saw the miracles and mighty deeds that the Holy One, blessed be He, wrought

for Jonah on the sea, became proselytes. For they all saw Jonah fall into the sea, [231a] and the fish come up and swallow him; and then, when the same great fish emerged on the surface in the presence of them all and vomited him on dry land, they came up to him and declared themselves proselytes. This is borne out by the words of Jonah, saying: "They that regard lying vanities will forsake their own mercy" (Jonah II, 9). Observe, further, that they all became righteous proselytes and rose to be sages of the Law of the highest rank. For the Holy One, blessed be He, found delight in them, as in all those who come near to Him and sanctify His Name openly; for when His disclosed Name is sanctified, His undisclosed Name ascends His Throne of Glory. So Scripture says, "but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel" (Lev. XXII, 32).'

AND THEY BOUND THE BREASTPLATE BY THE RINGS THEREOF UNTO THE RINGS OF THE EPHOD WITH A THREAD OF BLUE. Why blue? Because it is an all-uniting colour, and thus is symbolic of the supernal mystery. "A golden bell and a pomegranate . . . and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord" (Ex. XXVIII, 34–35); it was necessary for the sound to be heard so that blessings might rest on the world by reason of the blessing pronounced by the priest on all. The "pomegranate" is a symbol of plenty, on account of its multitude of seeds.

AND HE MADE THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD OF WOVEN WORK, ALL OF BLUE. The significance of the blue colour consists in its being a reflection of the light of the Divine Throne, a light which is one with the white light. Said R. Simeon: 'All the priestly robes were emblematic of the supernal mystery, having been made after the celestial pattern. It may here be asked: Seeing that Michael was the High Priest and belonged to the "right side", why is Gabriel referred to as "the man clothed in linen" (Dan. XII, 7), seeing that such robes could only be worn by the High Priest? But the truth is that the "left" is always embraced within

the "right", and hence Gabriel (although of the left) was clothed in these robes. Furthermore, Gabriel is the messenger for this world, hence he had to put on the garments of this world. The same has already been explained in regard to the soul which, whilst in the upper world, has to put on heavenly garments, but in descending below assumes lowly garments. Observe that the "robe of the ephod" was to cover the ephod when he put in on. It is written: "Thou hast formed me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me" (Ps. CXXXIX, 4). Observe that at the creation of Adam the Holy One, blessed be He, made him male and female together, female behind and male before. Then He sawed them asunder and tricked out the woman and brought her to Adam; and when they were thus brought face to face, love was multiplied in the world and they brought forth offspring, a thing that was not yet before. But when Adam and his wife sinned and the serpent had intercourse with Eve and injected into her his venom, she bore Cain, whose image was in part derived from on high and in part from the venom of the unclean and low side. Hence it was the Serpent who brought death into the world, in that it was his side that was the cause of it. It is the way of the serpent to lie in wait to slay, and thus the one that sprang from him followed the same course. So Scripture says: "And it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (Gen. IV, 8). We find it written in the Ancient Books that in the act of slaying Abel, Cain bit him repeatedly [231*b*] after the manner of the serpent, until he caused his soul to quit him. Abel was thus slain and his body resolved into its elements. Had not Cain been in part the offspring of the unclean side he would not have behaved so toward his brother. Adam, therefore, having seen Abel slain and Cain banished, said to himself: "Why henceforth should I bear children?" He then separated himself from his wife for a hundred and thirty years, during which period unclean female spirits conceived from him and bore spirits and demons,[1] so-called "plagues of the children of men" (2 Sam. VII, 14). After that, Adam became jealous, rejoined

[1] c. T. B. Erubin, 18.

his wife and begat Seth as we read, "and [he] begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Gen. V, 3); emphatically "in his own likeness, after his image", which did not happen before, that is, with the offspring born before that time. For previously intercourse with Adam was of another kind, but now the Holy One, blessed be He, brought Eve all beautified into the presence of Adam and they joined together face to face. Hence it is written, "this one shall be called woman" (*Ibid.* II, 23), to wit, this one and not any other. Observe that the ephod and breastplate were "behind and before", and so the Priest, when clothed in them, resembled the supernal pattern. As has already been said, when his face was illumined and the letters stood out brightly, then a message was thereby conveyed to him. For this reason the breastplate and the ephod were tied together; and although they had distinct functions, they had the same symbolism and were therefore united by the four rings that held them together, back and front. They thus symbolize the Chariots which are united from below to those above, and the whole symbolizes the *Ofanim* and *Hayoth* (Wheels and Sacred Beasts). It has already been explained that the verse, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", means that the lower world was created after the pattern of the upper. Now, the Tabernacle below was likewise made after the pattern of the supernal Tabernacle in all its details. For the Tabernacle in all its works embraced all the works and achievements of the upper world and the lower, whereby the Shekinah was made to abide in the world, both in the higher spheres and the lower. Similarly, the Lower Paradise is made after the pattern of the Upper Paradise, and the latter contains all the varieties of forms and images to be found in the former. Hence the work of the Tabernacle, and that of heaven and earth, come under one and the same mystery. It is written: "Lift up your eyes on high, and see: who hath created these? He that bringeth out their hosts by number. . . . Not one faileth" (Isa. XL, 26). Are we to imagine from this that by lifting his eyes upwards a man can know and see what is not permitted to know and see? No. The true meaning of the passage is

that whoever desires to reflect on and to obtain a knowledge of the works of the Holy One, blessed be He, let him lift his eyes upwards and gaze on the myriads of the hosts and legions of existences there, each different from the other, each mightier than the other. Then will he, while gazing, ask, "Who created these?" Indeed, as has already been expounded elsewhere, "Who created these ?" amounts to saying that the whole of creation springs from a region that remains an everlasting "Who ?" (*Mi?*), in that it remains undisclosed. "He that bringeth out their host by number", for inasmuch as that region is undisclosed it brings forth everything by means of the sound that issues from the trumpet, the sound that constitutes the "number" of all the celestial hosts and the sum of the whole of creation; and from thence also proceeds the mystery of sublime faith through all the supernal "sides", and then extending in grade after grade downwards, and widening out into numerous hosts after their kinds, all of whom are numbered, and "He calleth them all by name." The verse continues, "By the greatness of his might"—an allusion to the "right side", "for that he is strong in power" —alluding to the "left side", "no one faileth", this in allusion to the forces emanating from the two sides. [232*a*]. According to an alternative interpretation, the verse, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see: who hath created these ?" contains an allusion to the erection and completion of the Tabernacle. For whoever then looked at the Tabernacle saw in it an epitome of the upper world and the lower; for all the works of the universe were contained in the equipment of the Tabernacle. Thus whoever gazed with attention at the clasps of the Tabernacle saw in their gleam the radiance of the stars, inasmuch as they were disposed in the same way as the stars in heaven.'

R. Simeon discoursed on the verses: "Hallelujah. Praise ye the Lord from the heaven . . . Praise him, ye heavens of heavens . . . Praise the Lord from the earth . . ." (Ps. CXLVIII, 1–8). 'This psalm', he said, 'was indited by David in honour of the mystery of the Divine Name, which is the supreme object of praises. There are two all-embracing songs of praise: this one, and the one contained in the last psalm,

commencing: "Hallelujah. Praise God in his sanctuary" (*Ibid.* CL. 1–6). The latter psalm, however, contains a tenfold praise, alluding to ten musical instruments, but this one is a sevenfold hymn. The two, nevertheless, dwell on one and the same mystery, that of the Divine Name. This one begins, "Praise ye the Lord from the heaven", inasmuch as the heaven was the starting-point of the six directions which expanded downwards from it. This is the limit within which it is permitted to man to investigate. So Scripture says: "For ask now of the days past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other" (Deut. IV, 32), that is, so far art thou permitted to ask and investigate; but beyond it is not permitted to inquire, that being a sphere hidden and undisclosed. Hence, "praise ye the Lord from the heaven, praise him in the heights", these constituting the two directions, right and left, whence there was an expanding of all the others downwards in the mystery of the grades, till the development was complete. "Praise ye him, all his angels": these are the two supports on which the Body rests. These are here indicated by the term "angels" because, as the legs are, as it were, the messengers of man, moving about from place to place, so are the angels the messengers moving from place to place in the service of their Master, executing His messages. "Praise ye him, all his hosts," is an allusion to the region whence emanate all the supernal sacred hosts who are marked with the holy sign of the covenant. "Praise ye him, son and moon, praise ye him, all ye stars of light", to wit all the heavenly luminaries, stars and constellations. Now the Psalmist returns to the height of heights, the place by which all is held fast, saying: "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens"; then again he turns to the earth, saying, "Praise the Lord from the earth", etc. Observe that the stars of the lower world exist by the energy they attract to themselves from the supernal mystery, since the whole of existence is based on the supernal archetype, as said elsewhere. Hence all the supernal stars and constellations are entrusted with the guidance of the world beneath them; and from thence there evolve a series of grades upon grades reaching out to

the lower stars. All these have no power of their own whatever, but are under the power of the supernal world. Hence the words of Scripture: "Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers . . . stand up and save thee" (Isa. XLVII, 13) indicating that the lower world is under the jurisdiction of the supernal world.'

AND THEY MADE THE TUNICS OF FINE LINEN (*shesh*) . . . AND THE MITRE OF FINE LINEN (*shesh*), ETC. R. Jose, in exposition of this, cited the verse: "And it shall come to pass in the end of days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains", etc. (Isa. II, 2). 'That means', he said, 'that "in the end of days", when the Holy One, blessed be He, will visit the daughter of Jacob and raise her from the dust, when, further, the sun will be joined to the moon, then "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established", to wit, Upper Jerusalem, which will be illumined by the radiation of the supernal light, which will then shine with sevenfold effulgence. So Scripture says: "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days", etc. (*Ibid.* XXX, 26). "On the top of the mountains" [232*b*] signifies the High Priest, who is the head of all, and symbolizes the "right side"; it is he who continuously beautifies the House, and by his benediction gives it a glad aspect. That House will thus be established and adorned by means of those robes made after the supernal pattern. The House being established by the "top of the mountains", that is, by the High Priest, will rear itself aloft, and merge its existence in the supernal realm, so that the world will be filled with an effulgence radiating from the light supernal; and so Scripture continues, "and [it] shall be exalted above the hills", to wit, above all the celestial hosts and legions, "and all nations shall flow into it". Observe this. When the priest here below spreads out his hands [to bless the people], a celestial light first emerges, then all the lamps are kindled, their lights radiating into each other and fusing into each other until the face of the Community of Israel is irradiated.

All this comes to pass through the agency of the primordial light, which is the "High Priest". And the activity of the priest here below awakens a corresponding activity in the Priest on high. Thus "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains . . . and all the nations shall flow unto it". For, whereas now all the other nations have Chieftains in heaven to rule them, at that time the Holy One, blessed be He, will remove those Chieftains and depose them from their sovereignty, as we read, "the Lord will punish the host of the high heaven on high" (*Ibid.* XXIV, 21). And when all these are removed the Holy One alone, blessed be He, shall be acknowledged mighty, as Scripture says: "And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (*Ibid.* II, 11). And so the former passage continues: "And many peoples shall go and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob" (*Ibid.* 3). All this will come to pass when the High Priest, the "top of the mountains", shall illumine her, by the mystery of the number six (*shesh*), signifying the six directions of the world.'

R. Eleazar and R. Isaac and R. Judah were once walking together on the road. Said R. Eleazar: 'It is time we drew to ourselves the company of the Shekinah; this will only be if She hears from us words of the Torah.' R. Judah then remarked: 'Let the chief begin.' R. Eleazar then began to discourse on the verse: "I am small and despised, yet have I not forgotten thy precepts" (Ps. CXIX, 141). 'King David', he said, 'sometimes extols himself, saying, for instance, "and [He] whose mercy to his anointed, to David and to his seed, for evermore" (*Ibid.* XVIII, 51); or, "The saying of David, the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob" (2 Sam. XXIII, 1); and at other times he abases himself, saying, "for I am poor and needy" (Ps. LXXXVI, 1), or, as here: "I am small and despised." Now he also said of himself: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone" (*Ibid.* CXVIII, 22). The truth is that when he found himself in peace and triumphant over his enemies, he extolled himself; but when he found himself oppressed and harassed

by his enemies, he abased himself and called himself the poorest and the least of men. For at one time he would prevail over his enemies, and then he would again feel their pressure; but for all that he would always obtain dominion over them, and they were never able to discomfit him. Despite that, King David always humbled himself before the Holy One, blessed be He; for whoever abases himself before Him, He exalts above all other men. The Holy One, blessed be He, thus found David acceptable in this world and in the world to come—in this world, as it says, "For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (Isa. XXXVII, 35); and in the future world, as it says, "and [they] shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall come trembling unto the Lord and to his goodness in the end of days" (Hos. III, 5). David, indeed, was king in this world and will be king in the time to come; hence "the stone the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone". For, when the sun turns away his face from the moon, and does not shine upon her, she has no light whatever and so does not shine, but is poverty-stricken and dark on all sides; but when the sun turns towards her and radiates his light upon her, then her face is illumined and she adorns herself for him as a woman for a man. She thus is then invested [233*a*] with the dominion of the world. So David adorned himself after this very manner. Now he would appear poor and dejected, but then again he would be revelling in riches. Hence David's declaration, "I am small and despised, yet have I not forgotten thy precepts." It behoves, indeed, every man to follow this example and to humble himself in every respect so as to become a vessel in which the Holy One, blessed be He, may find delight. This lesson has also been expounded in connection with the phrase, "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit' (Isa. LVII, 15).'

R. Eleazar then continued: 'It is written, "And he brought me thither, and behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate" (Ezek. XL, 3). Ezekiel saw in this prophetical vision a "man",

but not "a man clothed in linen" (Dan. X, 5). For it is only when the angel is on an errand of severity that he is called "a man clothed in linen". Otherwise, he assumes various guises, appears in various attire conformably to the message he bears at the time being. Now, in the present vision "his appearance was like the appearance of brass", that is, he was clothed in the raiment formed of the "mountains of brass", and the "measuring reed" that he had in his hand was not the "Obscure Lamp"[1] of the hidden and treasured-up light, but it was formed out of a solidified part, as it were, of the residue of light left by the "Obscure Lamp", what time that light mounted up to the heights and became engraven within the scintillating and undisclosed brightness. The "measuring reed", therefore, is used for measuring the dimensions of the lower sphere.[2] Now, there is a "measuring *reed*" and a "measuring *line*". All the measurements of Ezekiel were by the measuring *reed*, whereas in the work of the Tabernacle all was measured by the measuring *line*. This is also used for the measuring of the dimensions of this world after the pattern of the "cord" (employed in Ezekiel's Temple), inasmuch as in the process of its extension a knot was formed at every cubit length, which length became the standard measure for the purpose, called *ammah* (cubit). That "measuring line" thus bears the name of "cubit"; and that explains the wording, "The length of each curtain was eight and twenty by the cubit (*ba-amah*), and the breadth of each curtain four by the cubit" (Ex. XXXVI, 9), the singular," cubit", pointing to the fact that it was the cubit which measured on every side. Now this was a projection from the Supernal Lamp, the lower measurement being the counterpart of the higher. The miniature lower measurement embraces a thousand and five hundred facets, each facet expanding into twelve thousand cubits. Thus one cubit moved along, growing into a "measuring line", each cubit in its turn being newly revealed; and so it resulted in a length of eight-and-twenty "by the cubit" and a breadth of four "by the cubit". Hence the one cubit covered thirty-two spaces, symbolic of the thirty-two "Paths of Wisdom"

[1] *Binah.* [2] *Beriah.*

that emanate from the supernal regions. Now the length (of the curtains) was formed into four sections of seven cubits each, the number seven expressing here the central mystical idea; similarly the thirty-two Paths are embraced within the seven, in their mystical symbolism of the Divine Name. So far in regard to this measurement, which was of a higher degree of holiness; for, indeed, there was another measured substance that was designed to be a covering to this, the external comprising the number thirty-four; whilst the internal was of the number thirty-two [233*b*], and, moreover, being of a higher degree of holiness, it contained the sacred colours enumerated in the passage, "of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet" (*Ibid.* 8). The same lesson is indicated in the words, "I went down into the garden of nuts" (S.S. VI, 11). For, as the nut has a shell surrounding and protecting the kernel inside, so it is with everything sacred: the sacred principle occupies the interior, whilst the "other side" encircles it on the exterior. This is the inward meaning of "the wicked doth surround the righteous" (Habakkuk I, 4). The same is indicated in the very name *EGVZ* (nut).[1] Observe that the exterior, the more it is enlarged the more worthless it becomes. As a mnemonic we have the sacrifices of the Feast of Tabernacles, the number of which goes on diminishing with the increase of days. We thus find the same here. Of the inner curtain it is written: "And thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains" (Ex. XXVI, 1); whereas for the outer ones the number was "eleven curtains" (*Ibid.* 7). Furthermore, of the outer curtains it says, "The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits" (*Ibid.* 8), the two numbers amounting together to thirty-four, a number symbolic of the lowest depth of poverty;[2] whereas the corresponding number in the ten curtains was thirty-two, a smaller number, but symbolizing the sublime mystery of the Faith, or the Divine Name. The lower is thus the

[1] The numerical value of *EGVZ* (1+3+6+7)=17. Similarly, *HT* (sin) (9+8=17; and *TVB* (the good) (9+6+2)=17.

[2] Since 34 is the numerical value of *DaL* (D=4, L=30), signifying the lowest extreme of poverty.

higher, and the higher the lower. The former constitutes the interior, the latter the exterior. Now the same "measuring-line" went on expanding and thus measured the boards, concerning which it is written: "And he made the boards for the tabernacle of acacia-wood, standing up" (*Ibid.* XXXVI, 20). These symbolized the Seraphim, as indicated by the description "standing up", which is paralleled in "Seraphim were standing up" (Isa. VI, 2). Now, here it is written, "Ten cubits shall be the length of a board" (Ex. XXVI, 16), and not "ten by the cubit". This is because the boards represented the three triads with a single one hovering high above them.[1] The number eleven and a half[2] has its recondite significance in that the boards symbolized a striving upwards, but not yet reaching to the degree of the *Ophanim*,[3] the half being expressive of incompleteness. This concerns the mystery of the Holy Chariot, for the twenty boards divide themselves into ten on this side and ten on the other, denoting a reaching out to the height of the sublime Seraphim. Then there is a further ascent in the holy region, denoted by the "middle bar" (*Ibid.* XXVI, 28). There is also an inward significance in the twenty boards in that they embrace the number 230.[4] The value of each prescribed measure has here its proper meaning. The curtains of the Tabernacle mentioned before stand for sublime mysteries, namely, the mystery of heaven, regarding which Scripture says: "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain" (Ps. CIV, 2). Now, of the two sets of curtains, the one expresses one aspect of the mystery whilst the other expresses another aspect of the same mystery. The whole is designed to teach us Wisdom in all its aspects and all its manifestations; and so that man may discern between good and evil, between what Wisdom teaches and what it rejects. The mystery of the basic measurement, as elsewhere laid

[1] i.e. the 10 Sefiroth, consisting of 3 groups of 3 each with the Sefirah *Kether* (Crown) above them. [2] i.e. the sum of 10 (the length of each board)+1½ (the breadth). [3] Lit. Wheels. An angelic order above that of Seraphim.

[4] i.e. Twenty times the length of each plus twenty times the breadth of each: (20×10)+(20×1½)=230. The number 230 is the numerical value of certain sacred names.

down, embraces various objects. The Ark in its dimensions falls within the same recondite principle, in respect of what it received and what it possesses of its own. [234a] We thus read: "two cubits and a half was the length of it" (Ex. XXXVII, 1). The one cubit on either side tells us about the Ark being the recipient from this side and from that side; whilst the half cubit in the centre represents what it had possessed of its own; and the same is indicated by the cubit and a half of its breadth and a cubit and a half of its height: each cubit speaks of what accrued to it, and each half of what is possessed already. For there must needs be something for something else to rest on, and hence the existing half in every account. There is a further recondite significance in that the Ark was inlaid with gold inside and outside so as to have its dimensions formed after the archetypal plan. The table was similarly measured by this archetypal scale. The dimensions of the Ark, however, were not used elsewhere, for reasons revealed to the wise. Similarly, all the other works of the Tabernacle were measured by the same cubit, with the exception of the breastplate, which was measured by the span. Now observe this. The tunic embraced the mystery of the "six" (*shesh*)[1] in that it symbolized the vesture designed for the setting right and investiture of all that comes within the "six" (directions of the world). So far the recondite significance of the "measuring-line". In the vision of Ezekiel, however, we find instead the "measuring-*reed*", for the reason that the House which he beheld was destined to remain forever in its place with the same walls, the same lines, the same entrances, the same doors, every part in accordance with prescribed measure. But in regard to the time to come, Scripture says: "And the side-chambers were broader as they wound higher and higher" (Ezek. XLI, 7). For immediately the building will be begun that "measuring-reed" will mount higher and higher in the length and in the breadth, so that the House will be extended on all sides, and no malign influence shall ever light on it. For at that time

[1] i.e. the six directions of the world. The homophone *shesh* = linen (of which the tunic was made) and also = six.

Severity will no more be found in the world; hence everything will remain firmly and immovably established, as Scripture says, "and [they will] be disquieted no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more", etc. (2 Sam. VII, 10). And observe that all these measurements prescribed for this world had for their object the establishment of this world after the pattern of the upper world, so that the two should be knit together into one mystery. At the destined time, when the Holy One, blessed be He, will bestir Himself to renew the world, all the world will be found to express one mystery, and the glory of the Almighty will then be over all, in fulfilment of the verse, "In that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one" (Zech. XIV, 9).'

R. Judah followed with a discourse on the verse: "The counsel (*sod*) of the Lord is with them that fear him; and his covenant to make them know it" (Ps. XXV, 14). ' "The counsel" (*sod*),'[1] he said, 'alludes to the sublime mystical knowledge which remains hidden and undisclosed save for those that fear the Lord continuously and thus prove themselves worthy of these secrets and able to keep them. Observe that the world has been made and established by an engraving of forty-two letters, all of which are the adornment of the Divine Name. These letters combined and soared aloft and dived downwards, forming themselves into crowns in the four directions of the world, so that it might endure. They then went forth and created the upper world and the lower, the world of unification and the world of division. In the latter they are called "mountains of separation" (*bather*) (S.S. II, 17), which are watered when the south side begins to come near [234b] them. The water flows with supernal energy and with ecstatic joy. Whilst the Thought mounts up with exulting joy out of the most Undisclosed One, there flows out of it a spark: the two then come into contact with each other, as explained elsewhere.[2] These forty-two letters thus constitute the supernal mystical principle; by them were created the upper and the lower

[1] *Sod* in the Bible = counsel; in post-Biblical Hebrew = secret. [2] Zohar, Exodus, 220*b*.

worlds, and they indeed constitute the basis and recondite significance of all the worlds. Thus is explained the verse, "The secret of the Lord is to them that fear him; and his covenant to make them know it", the first part alluding to the undisclosed engraven letters, whereas the latter speaks of the revealed. Now, it is written: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgement the Urim and the Thummim" (Ex. XXVIII, 30). The term "Urim" (lit. light, illumination) signifies the luminous speculum, which consisted of the engravure of the Divine Name composed of forty-two letters by which the world was created; whereas the Thummim consisted of the non-luminous speculum made of the Divine Name as manifested in the twenty-two letters. The combination of the two is thus called Urim and Thummim. Observe that by the power of these sunken letters were the other letters, namely, the raised letters forming the names of the tribes, now illumined, now darkened. The letters of the Divine Name embrace the mystery of the Torah, and all the worlds are a projection of the mystery of those letters. The Torah begins with a *Beth* followed by an *Aleph*,[1] indicating thereby that the world was created by the power of these letters, the *Beth* symbolizing the female principle and the *Aleph* the male principle, and both engendering, as it were, the group of the twenty-two letters. Thus we read, "In the beginning God created the (*eth*) heaven and the (*eth*) earth" (Gen. I, 1), where the particle *eth* (consisting of *Aleph* and *Tau*) is a summary of the twenty-two letters by which the earth is nourished.[2] Now, the same letters were the instruments used in the building of the Tabernacle. This work was carried out by Bezalel for the reason that, as his very name (*Bezel-El* = in the shadow of God) implies, he had a knowledge of the various permutations of the letters, by the power of which heaven and earth were created. Without such knowledge Bezalel could not have accomplished the work of the Tabernacle; for, inasmuch as the celestial Tabernacle was made in all its parts by the mystical power of those letters, the lower Tabernacle could only be prepared

[1] Allusion to *Bereshith Bara Elohim* (in the beginning God created).
[2] v. Zohar, Gen. 16*b*.

by the power of the same letters. Bezalel was skilled in the various permutations of the Divine Name, and for each several part he employed the appropriate permutation of the letters. But when it came to the rearing up of the Tabernacle it was beyond his power, for the reason that the disposition of those letter-groups was entrusted to Moses alone, and hence [235*a*] it was by Moses that the Tabernacle was erected. So Scripture says: "And Moses reared up . . . and [he] laid . . . and put in . . ." (Ex. XL, 18)—Moses, but not Bezalel.'

R. Isaac then followed with a discourse on the verses: "O Lord, in thy strength the king rejoiceth; and in thy salvation how greatly doth he exult! Thou hast given him his heart's desire . . . he asked life of thee, thou gavest it to him, even length of days for ever and ever" (Ps. XXI, 2–5). He said: 'David intended in this psalm to sing the praises of the Community of Israel by pointing out that the Holy One, blessed be He, is gladdened by means of the Torah, which is called "strength", as it is written, "The Lord will give strength unto the people" (*Ibid.* XXI, 11). The "king" in this verse refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, and the salvation mentioned is that of the Right. The verse continues: "He asked life of thee, thou gavest it to him, even length of days for ever and ever". From here we learn that King David was not endowed with any life-duration at all of his own, but it was Adam who made him a gift of a portion of his life, consisting of seventy years.[1] He thus attained length of life, both in this world and in the world to come. "His glory is great", because the Holy One, blessed be He, is the greater of "the two great lights" (Gen. I, 16), but only "through thy salvation". The Psalm continues: "For thou makest him most blessed (lit. blessings) for ever; thou makest him glad with joy in thy presence" (*Ibid.* XXI, 7), because He is the blessing of the whole world, the source of all blessing; similarly, it was said to Abram, "and be thou a blessing" (Gen. XII, 2): "Thou wilt make him glad with joy"; this refers to the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise the Community of Israel from the dust and

[1] v. Yalkut Hadash, 5*b*; Zohar, Gen. 55*a*.

renew Her with the renewal of the moon in joy; "in thy presence", to wit, to abide joyfully in Thy presence, in the perfection which She will achieve in that time. For when the Sanctuary was destroyed it was emptied of all its fulness, as we read: "She that hath borne seven languisheth" (Jer. XV, 9), also, "I shall be filled with her that is laid waste" (Ezek. XXVI, 2).[1]

'Observe that when Moses was about to rear up the Tabernacle, he first surveyed each several part to see if it had been made properly, and only then did he rear it up; the several parts were one by one brought to him, this being the recondite idea of the verse, "the virgins her companions in her train being brought unto thee" (Ps. XLV, 15). So Scripture says: AND THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE UNTO MOSES. They brought it to Moses as the time had come for his espousals; just as the bride is first brought to the bridegroom and then he enters unto her; so first they "brought the Tabernacle unto Moses" and then he entered into the tent of meeting. Indeed, it is written: AND MOSES WAS NOT ABLE TO ENTER INTO THE TENT OF MEETING, BECAUSE THE CLOUD ABODE THEREON, for the reason that *She* was then arraying herself in *Her* finery as a woman tires and bedecks herself to receive her husband; and at such a moment it is unseemly for the husband to enter unto her. Thus "Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting . . .", and they had to bring "the Tabernacle unto Moses". [235*b*] Observe that throughout all the works about the Tabernacle the colour of blue was to play a part, as that colour summarized in its adornment the recondite significance of all the colours. Scripture thus says: AND THEY MADE THE PLATE OF THE HOLY CROWN OF PURE GOLD . . . AND THEY TIED UNTO IT A THREAD OF BLUE.

'The Tabernacle, in its recondite significance, reflected the supernal mysteries comprised within the Divine Name *ADNY*. The same significance is reflected by the Ark, of which it is written: "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the

[1] v. T. B. Pesahim, 72*b et passim*. There is at this point a lacuna in the text.

Lord (*ADN*) of all the earth" (Jos. III, 11), the term *ADN* being identical with the Divine Name *ADNY*. The name *ADNY* corresponds to the most sublime Divine Name *YHVH*, the *Aleph* of the one containing the same recondite meaning as the *Yod* of the other, the *Daleth* of the one corresponding to the *Hé* of the other, and so with the *Nun* and *Vau*, the *Nun* being emblematic of the male principle and the *Vau* of the female principle, but the two forming a complete whole; and so, too, with the *Yod* of the one and the *Hé* of the other. The several letters of the two Names, moreover, imply each other, complement each other, and together enfold one mystery. Now, the lower and earthly Tabernacle was the counterpart of the upper Tabernacle, whilst the latter in its turn is the counterpart of a higher Tabernacle, the most high of all. All of them, however, are implied within each other and form one complete whole, as it says: "that the tabernacle may be one whole" (Ex. XXVI, 6). The Tabernacle was erected by Moses, he alone being allowed to raise it up, as only a husband may raise up his wife. With the erection of the lower Tabernacle there was erected another Tabernacle on high. This is indicated in the words "the tabernacle was reared up (*huḳam*)" (Ex. XL, 17), reared up, that is, by the hand of no man, but as out of the supernal undisclosed mystery in response to the mystical force indwelling in Moses that it might be perfected with him. It is written above: "And all the wise men that wrought [236*a*] all the work of the sanctuary came", etc. (*Ibid.* XXXVI, 4). The "wise men that wrought" embrace the "right", the "left", and all the other sides constituting the ways and paths that lead into the sea and fill it. These wrought the supernal Tabernacle and perfected it. Likewise, the lower Tabernacle was wrought by Bezalel and Oholiab, the one of the right, the other of the left, followed by "every wise-hearted man", all after the supernal pattern. On the day the Tabernacle was reared up death was removed from the world, that is, it was deprived of its dominion over the world. For, indeed, the entire extinction of the evil impulse will not come to pass until the coming of King Messiah, when the Holy One, blessed be He, will rejoice in His works

and "he will swallow up death for ever" (Isa. XXV, 8). Yet when the Tabernacle was reared up by the hand of Moses the power of the evil impulse was subdued so that it could not exercise dominion. At that time the power of Samael, the wielder of the fury of the "left side", was removed from the evil serpent, so that the latter was not able to dominate the world or attach himself to man and lead him astray.' R. Judah said: 'It is written: "And Moses used to take the tent and pitch it without the camp" (Ex. XXXIII, 7). The reason of this was that Moses did not wish that the "holy side" should rest in the midst of the side of defilement.' Said R. Eleazar: 'So long as the "holy side" rules, the side of defilement is powerless and bows before it. So we have learnt that so long as Jerusalem is in its fulness wicked, Tyre remains devastated.'[1]

R. Eleazar said: 'It is written: "And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel" (Gen. XXIV, 64). What is the significance of this verse that it should be written in the Torah? Is it merely to tell us that the sight of Isaac's good looks made her alight from the camel? The truth is that this verse contains a recondite meaning. Observe that when Rebekah encountered Isaac it was the time of *Minḥa* (afternoon prayer), a time when Rigour is at large in the world, and she discerned him as one who was of the region of fierce Rigour, a region symbolized by the camel (*gamal*),[2] and hence she leaned and slipped off that camel. This camel is all-devouring and all-exterminating, is always ready to inflict death on man. Hence, whenever a man sees a camel in his dream it signifies that death was decreed upon him, but he was delivered. Observe that the side of defilement is so designated by reason of it having brought death into the world. The same it was that seduced Adam and his wife, and Samael is the one that rides on it and leads the world astray, and brings about the death of every one. It was Adam who first drew him to himself, so that he became their seducer. Of this

[1] *v.* T.B. Pesaḥim 42*b*. [2] The Zohar plays upon the Hebrew root *GML*, which as *GaMaL* = camel, and as *GeMuL* = reward, requitement, for good or evil deed.

Solomon said, "and come not nigh the door of her house" (Prov. V, 8), for whoever comes nigh her house, she emerges, attaches herself, and is drawn unto him. Thus when Rebekah discerned Isaac as being of the side of Rigour, the side of the dross of gold, she straightway alighted from the camel so as to break herself loose from the Rigour and the dross. Observe [236*b*] that when the Israelites committed the sin of the Golden Calf there was no reason why they should have made a calf rather than anything else of the evil side. But, indeed, they did not choose the Calf, but merely said: "Up, make us a god who shall go before us" (Ex. XXXII, 1); and Aaron intended to delay them. But the Calf was the appropriate form. For from the side of gold there emerged the dross, out of which spread in all directions all the forces of the "left side". All these forces have the red colour of gold, and are under the influence of the sun. For when the sun reaches his full strength he generates gold in the earth; and the Chieftain ruling under the force of the sun has the appearance of a calf, and is described as "the destruction (*keteb*) that wasteth at noonday" (Ps. XCI, 6). The red side, the defiled spirit, is the same as the Evil Serpent. On him there rides a male-female being, called *eleh* (these), so called for the reason that they appear everywhere in various guises. On the opposite side is the Holy Spirit, called *zoth* (this),[1] pointing to the emblem of the holy covenant which is always found on man. The others, however, are called "these", wherefore it is written "yea, *these*[2] may forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Isa. XLIX, 15). The same is alluded to in "For *these* things I weep" (Lam. I, 16), inasmuch as that sin was the cause of many weepings for Israel. Alternately, "For *these* I weep", to wit, for the dark forces of that region to whom was given the licence to dominate over Israel and to destroy the Sanctuary. "*These*" (*eleh*) points thus to the powers of the *unclean-side*, and "*I* weep" points to the Holy Spirit, who is named "I". One might indeed urge against this, citing the words: "*These* (*eleh*) are the words

[1] Allusion to Isa. LIX, 21: "this is My covenant with them". [2] Allusion to the Golden Calf, *v.* Midrash Eikhoh, *in loco*.

of the covenant" (Deut. XXVIII, 69).[1] But in truth, even here the word *eleh* (these) points to the curses awaiting him who will transgress "the words of the covenant". Similarly, in the passage, "*These* are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses" (Lev. XXVII, 34), the word "*these*" is a warning to man to purify himself by the observance of the precepts of the Torah and not to stray from the right path, but to keep afar from the evil powers. As regards "*These* are the generations of Noah" (Gen. VI, 9), the word *eleh* (these) is assuredly appropriate there, inasmuch as Noah begat Ham, the father of Canaan, in regard to whom it is written, "Cursed be Canaan" (*Ibid.* IX, 25). This, then, is the esoteric implication of *eleh* (these), pointing in our text to the dross and refuse of the gold. Now Aaron offered up the gold because he was of the side of fire, and gold is under the influence of the force of fire, the two being, as it were, one. The Unclean Spirit, whose haunting place is the desert, thus found at that moment an occasion to seize hold of him; and so, whereas Israel standing at Mount Sinai were purged of the primitive venom that the evil spirit injected into the world, thereby bringing death to all mankind, now the same evil spirit defiled them anew, took hold of them and brought again death to them and to all mankind and for all their generations to follow. Scripture so says: "I said: Ye are godlike beings. . . . But ye shall die like men", etc. (Ps. LXXXII, 6–7). Aaron therefore had to purge himself afterwards during the seven sacred days,[2] and after that by means of a calf.[3] Observe that Aaron had to purge himself, for but for him the calf would not have emerged. For Aaron belonged to the "right side", he symbolized the strength of the sun, the source whence gold originates; and so the unclean spirit came down and insinuated itself, with the result that the Israelites were defiled, and Aaron also. Aaron was defiled through the emergence of the calf that belongs to the left side, as it says: [237a] "and the face of the ox on the left side" (Ezek. I, 10). Thus, though Aaron was of the "right side", the "left side" was there in absorption, the

[1] This is cited to prove that *eleh* (these) is associated with the good as well as evil. [2] v. Lev. VIII, 33. [3] v. *Ibid.* IX, 2.

side that gave occasion for the calf. In this way the unclean spirit prevailed and regained his former rule over the world. For Israel, through their sin, drew to themselves the evil impulse as formerly. And in order to purge themselves they needed to offer up a goat, inasmuch as the goat is the portion of the evil impulse, that is, the unclean spirit, as already said. It is written: "And they exchanged their glory for the likeness of an ox that eateth grass" (Ps. CVI, 20). This is an allusion to the calf that came from the "left side". "Their glory" signifies the Shekinah that led the way before them, but which they exchanged for something unclean. Thus will the slimy venom not pass out of the world until the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will remove it, as it says: "and I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the earth" (Zech. XIII, 7).

'Now some sorcerers succeed in their art and others do not succeed, although they use the same practices, since the success of sorcery depends on the man himself. We have an example in Balaam, who was the very man for such arts, he being, as tradition tells us, blind in one eye,[1] and looking askance with the other. But of those who have to serve with the holy spirit it is written: "For whatsoever he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man or a lame" (Lev. XXI, 18). So here the way was paved for the unclean spirit to enter and obtain dominion. It found a desert utterly uninhabitable, as it is written, "wherein were serpents, fiery serpents, and scorpions", etc. (Deut. VIII, 15), a spot that belongs to his dominion, and that contained gold enough for his use. It also found in Aaron a medium through which to insinuate itself into the "right" side. Thus the place being in all ways suitable it emerged into the open, and the deed was done. So when Aaron wished to become purged, he offered up a calf so as to execute judgement, as it were, on the "evil side". Whereas before he brought forth the Calf to make it ruler, he afterwards offered up a calf in order to subdue the evil power, for once punishment is executed on the "left side" all the subordinate rulers of that side are subdued. In regard to this, Scripture

[1] v. Rashi ad Num. XXIV, 15.

says: "Eat not of it raw . . . but roast with fire, its head on its legs" (Ex. XII, 8), so as to break the evil power and subdue it, and so that all its subordinates should no more exercise rule. Similarly we read: "a red heifer, faultless", etc. (Num. XIX, 2). This had the same object, namely, to subdue all those sides of the unclean spirit.' Said R. Abba to R. Eleazar: 'But is not the heifer sacred and purifying? and how can this be?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Indeed, it is so. It has been expounded that it was an epitome of the four Kingdoms.[1] Thus, the "heifer" is Israel, of whom it is written, "For Israel is stubborn like a stubborn heifer" (Hos. IV, 16); "a red [heifer]" indicates the Kingdom of Babylonia, regarding which it says, "thou art the head of gold" (Dan. II, 38); "faultless" points to the Kingdom of Media;[2] and "wherein is no blemish" indicates the Kingdom of Greece (who were near the true faith). "Upon which never came yoke" alludes to the Kingdom of Edom,[3] which was never under the yoke of any other power. It is written: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job. XIV, 4). [237b] The heifer is such a thing; for first it was an unclean thing,[4] but after judgement had been executed on her, after she had passed through the fire and was burned to ashes, she was transformed into a purifying agency. Hence all those who busied themselves with it became defiled, and even after it turned into ashes, before these were gathered and removed, it defiled all who handled them, as we read: "And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean", etc. (Num. XIX, 10). But as soon as water was poured over the ashes they became clean—a clean thing out of an unclean. After the clean had emerged out of the unclean, whatever was allied to the unclean spirit fled. So now the Holy Spirit obtained dominion, and the unclean spirit was subjugated utterly. The latter received its punishment without the camp in harmony with the precept, "therefore shall thy camp be holy" (Deut. XXIII, 15).' R. Abba then approached and kissed R. Eleazar.

Said R. Simeon: 'All this is true, yet nevertheless the Holy

[1] *v.* Daniel VIII. [2] An allusion to Cyrus, the liberator of the Babylonian Jews. [3] i.e. Rome. [4] i.e. a symbol of the evil power that was to be destroyed.

One, blessed be He, has conferred power on the unclean spirit and it behoves man to subjugate him from all directions. Now I am about to reveal to you', he said, 'a mystery which is only permitted to be revealed to the superior saints. The Holy One, blessed be He, has conferred power upon the place which is the unclean spirit to have dominion over the world in many ways and to be enabled to inflict harm; we thus dare not treat him lightly, but we have to be on our guard against him lest he indict us, even in our holy actions. We have, therefore, a secret device, namely, to assign him a little space within our holy performances, since it is out of the source of holiness that he derives his power. Hence we are required to enclose inside the phylacteries a hair of a calf with one end jutting out and exposed to sight. This hair is incapable of communicating defilement, since it is smaller than a barley grain.[1] Now, when the unclean spirit beholds this hair that is within the supremely holy, and thus finds that he has a portion therein, he will abstain from assailing the wearer and will be powerless to inflict evil on him, whether on high or below. Whereas if nothing is given him within what is holy he brings accusations, saying, that-and-that man who at the moment makes himself holy has done such-and-such a deed on such-and-such a day, and these-and-these are the sins he committed; so that the man will thus be brought to judgement and be punished. The Israelites, who were aware of this secret, used to adopt a similar device when they began to sanctify themselves on the Day of Atonement; they at once made provision for assigning the unclean spirit his portion, so that he should not accuse them nor bring to notice the sins of Israel. For when he presents himself to bring accusations against Israel, ever so many bands and hosts stand there ready to take up his word. Happy is the portion of him who is able to be on his guard so that his sins should not be brought to notice on high, and so that he should not be regarded with disfavour.' Meanwhile tears began to flow from R. Abba's eyes. Said R. Eleazar to him: "Abba, Abba, unloose thy girdle, and wipe the tears from thy face, inasmuch as the mystic doctrines of the Torah were entrusted

[1] Allusion (apparently inexact) to Mishnah, Ahaloth III, 2.

to the righteous, as it is written: "The secret (*sod*)[1] of the Lord is for them that fear him" (Ps. XXV, 14).'

Observe that on New Year's Day the world is brought to trial before the holy Judgement Seat; and there stands on one side the evil spirit who regards intently and makes a record of all those that are doomed to death. But at the moment [238a] that Israel awakens mercy by means of the sound of the trumpet (*shofar*) he becomes altogether confused and distracted, and turns his gaze away from the doomed ones. This continues until some time after.[2] Then all those under decree of death who have not repented of their sins are delivered into the hands of the evil power under a final order of death, which order is irrevocable. The whole of Israel together have thus to be on guard against him, and how much more so one who is by himself. We have thus to assign him at every New Moon a he-goat as his portion, so that he will abstain from acting as accuser. The sacred moon will thus draw sustenance in holiness and be fittingly renewed. The moon being renewed every month is thus called "*na'ar*" (youth), but the opposite force, which is forever immersed in defilement, is called "old and foolish king" (Eccles. IV, 13). Thus for holy Israel, the one nation united to God in holiness, the Holy One, blessed be He, has provided a means of escape from all the evil powers. Happy are they in this world and in the world to come. So Scripture says: "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, wherein I glory" (Isa. LX, 21).

'AND THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE UNTO MOSES, ETC. It is written: "And above the firmament" (Ezek. I, 26). This alludes to the firmament that is placed over the four *Ḥayoth* (Holy Animals) who are impinged on by the spirit of the *Ḥayah* (Holy Animal), by whose spirit they all rise aloft, as it says: "and when the Ḥayoth were lifted up from the earth, the Ofanim (Wheels) were lifted up beside them, for the spirit of the Ḥayah was in the Ofanim" (*Ibid.* I, 21).

[1] *Sod* in Bib. Heb. = counsel, in post-Bib. = secret, mystery. [2] i.e. the eve of the Last day of Tabernacles.

It is when the space of that region, as it were, impinges on them that the four *Ḥayoth* rise and carry aloft the superior *Ḥayah*, bringing it to the Supernal Illumination. This is esoterically alluded to in the words, "The virgins her companions in her train being brought unto thee" (Ps. XLV, 15), the four *Ḥayoth* being so designated. These raise the Supernal *Ḥayah* higher and higher so as to uphold the Supernal Throne, as esoterically indicated in the words, "and [they] bore up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth" (Gen. VII, 17). The same allusion can be found in the words, "And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses", Moses being a synonym of Adam. The Tabernacle is symbolic of all the members of the Body when suffused with a holy desire for the union of the male and female principles. So "they brought the tabernacle", since the bride is first to be brought to her spouse, who subsequently takes up his abode with her permanently.

'Again, the words, "And they brought the tabernacle to Moses" are an allusion to those who daily concentrate their minds [whilst reciting their prayers] on the mysteries of the divine unification, and lift up this throne until they bring it unto "Moses". Thereby they draw unto themselves blessings from the very source of life. Of this Scripture says: AND MOSES SAW ALL THE WORK. . . . AND MOSES BLESSED THEM, the blessings thus flowing from the region that is of the grade of Moses. Thus the prayer of every man is scrutinized, whether it is recited with the proper concentration on divine unification; [238b] and if it is found to be so, then the man receives blessings from the fount of blessings. Thus, so soon as "they had done it, etc." "Moses blessed them", AND THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE TO MOSES, inasmuch as he was the "master of the house", whom it behoved to supervise its arrangements and mysteries, which none else was permitted to observe and look upon. When they brought the tabernacle to Moses, they brought it in all its parts, each part to be fitted in its place, and all the parts to be joined together to form a whole. For when they attempted to do so themselves, they did not succeed; so they brought it to Moses, who straightway succeeded in joining

the parts together, putting each in its place. So we read, "and Moses reared up the tabernacle", and also, "the tabernacle was reared up".

'Observe that when Moses was about to set up the tabernacle and to adjust all its parts and members, fitting them one into the other, all the components of the unclean, or "other" side, became enfeebled. For when the one side, the side of holiness, ascends in power, the unclean side relaxes, and similarly, when the other side ascends this side becomes feeble. When one is full the other is desolate, as with Jerusalem and Tyre.[1] Moses thus "reared up the tabernacle" so as to be fortified by the supernal power and not be overcome by the lower power. Moses, moreover, whose vision was through the "luminous glass", was the one needed for the rearing up of the tabernacle, that he might be enlightened by it and not by some inferior light, just as the moon must receive its light from the sun and not from any other source.

'Observe now, that the Community of Israel had to raise and attach itself to the sun.' In this connection R. Simeon expounded thus the verse: "This is the law of the burnt-offering (*'olah*); it is that which goes up . . ." (Lev. VI, 2). 'The burnt-offering symbolizes the ascent of the Community of Israel and her attachment [to the Holy One] within the World-to-come, so as to form a unity, and therefore She is called *'olah* (ascending). It is thus written: "This is the law (Torah) of the burnt-offering (*'olah*)", to wit, the Written Law and the Oral Law, the two representing the unity of the male and female principles. She is called "the *'olah*" because she ascends to the World-to-come, designated the holy of holies. Similarly, the burnt-offering (*'olah*) is holy of holies, and therefore it is killed northward [of the altar], since it is of the left side in that the Oral Law is not embraced save when the north side is awakened, as it says: "Let his left hand be under my head, and his right hand embrace me" (S.S. II, 6). The Oral Law then goes up in love, is entwined in the right and attached in the midst, and the whole becomes illumined from the esoteric source of the Holy of Holies,

[1] *Vide* T. B. Pesahim, 42*b*.

under the beneficent influence of the service of the priests, the song of the Levites, and the prayer of Israel.

'As already said, the burnt-offering, the most holy grade of offerings, is the emblem of the supernal spirit. For there are three spirits knit together: the lower spirit, designated the Holy Spirit; the intermediate spirit, called "spirit of wisdom and understanding", a name also borne by the lower spirit. But the spirit that proceeds out of the trumpet and is composed of fire and water is called "supernal spirit", since it is hidden and silent, and in it are concentrated all the holy spirits and all the illumined countenances. The burnt-offering was thus transmuted, as it were, into the very essence of that spirit, whereas its beast-part, the consumed fats, were food for the unclean side. Not so the other, or peace-offerings, which had in them the sides of the forces of Rigour, and hence were named "lesser holy offerings"; for they do not ascend as adornments to the height [239*a*] of heights like the most holy offerings; and hence may be killed on any side of the altar.'

R. Simeon further expounded the verse: "Man and beast thou preservest, O Lord" (Ps. XXXVI, 7). 'Man', he said, 'comes from the side of Man, that is, from that of Adam, whereas beast comes from its own side, that of beast. Hence, "When a man brings from you an offering . . . of the cattle", etc. (Lev. I, 2), indicating that the offering is first from man, and then from the cattle, that is, the beast-part, both being necessary for our offering. Similarly, God at the Creation made man and beast together (on the same day). It may be said that birds are also eligible for offerings, and even for burnt-offerings, as we read, "And if his offering be a burnt-offering of fowls" (Lev. I, 14). Note, however, that of fowls, only turtle-doves and young pigeons are eligible for an offering, the qualifications of the two being opposite to each other;[1] since the former is symbolic of the right, the latter of the left. This is indicated in "and let fowl (*'of* = flying creatures) fly", an esoteric allusion to the Heavenly Chariot

[1] According to T. B. Hulin, 22*a*–22*b*, there is a special age qualification for each, that of the turtle-dove commencing when that of the young pigeon had already terminated.

by which the Holy spirit ascends upwards, the term "fowl" being symbolic of the right side, the same being Michael, and the term "let fly" of the left, the same being Gabriel, the two together forming a unity: to wit, that of the lower world with the upper world, or of the Spouse with Her Master. In the Ancient Books it is stated that the poor man[1] provides a portion only for the upper regions, but the truth is that even his portion is distributed both in the upper and the lower regions, each receiving the part appropriate to it. R. Eleazar asked of R. Simeon how far in the heights the burnt-offering reaches. In reply R. Simeon said: 'Even as far as *En-Sof* (without end)—the Infinite, where is the union and consummation of all in complete mystery. *En-Sof* cannot be known, nor how it makes beginning or end, just as the zero number produces beginning and end. What is the beginning ? This is the supernal Point, the beginning of all, hidden in "Thought". And it makes the end which is called "the end of the matter" (Eccles. XII, 13). But beyond there is "no end"—neither intention nor light nor lamp; all the lights are dependent on it, but it cannot be reached. This is a Supreme Will, mysterious above all mysteries. It is Zero (*'En*). When the supreme Point and the World-to-come ascend, they catch no more than a scent of it. . . . This, however,[2] is not "a sweet savour", for such is furnished only by the combination of the three acceptable services of prayer, song, and offering, the whole symbolizing "man". It is this sweet odour which drives away the other side—a service performed by the hand of the priest, as it says: "Command Aaron [239*b*] and his sons, saying" (Lev. XVII, 2), the term "command", as tradition tells us, alluding to idolatry.[3] This signifies that the evil thought is removed from the holy principle, is separated along with the smoke and the burning fats, whilst the favoured part of the sacrifice ascends on high in its pure holiness. This is the work that was entrusted to the priests. It is true that the same term "command" is used in connection with the whole of Israel,

[1] Whose offerings consist only of birds. [2] The text seems here to revert abruptly to the subject of the offering of the bird introduced above. [3] v. T. B. Sanhedrin, 56*b*.

as we read: "Command the children of Israel" (Num. XXVIII, 1). Israel, however, achieve the same work by means of prayer and obedience to the will of their Master. It is by this means that the evil is made powerless to rule over them; and this verse indicates how the Holy Spirit ascends ever higher whilst the spirit of defilement sinks to the lowest depths. Thus, what Israel achieves through prayer the priests achieve through the temple service. All this falls within the work of the priest, and thus is expounded the recondite doctrine of the co-operation (in the sacrifice) of "man and beast". Happy is the portion of the righteous in this world and in the world to come, in that they know the ways of the Torah and thus walk in the way of truth. Of them it is written: "O Lord, by these things", to wit, by the ways of the Torah, "men live" (Isa. XXXVIII, 16), to wit, in this world and in the world to come.

'According to another interpretation, the term "this is the law" refers to the Community of Israel, and the term *ha-'olah* (that which ascends) to the evil thought that rises up in man's mind to turn him aside from the way of truth. The verse thus continues: "on its fire-wood upon the altar all night", signifying that the evil thought has to be consumed in fire so as not to allow it to grow. By the term "night" is meant the Community of Israel, which comes to purge man of the evil thought, and so "on its fire-wood" points to the "fiery stream" (*n'har di-nur*) (Dan. VII, 10), the place where the "unstable" (spirits) have to pass through the burning fire and be deprived of their power. When that happens, the Community of Israel, being the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, ascends on high. It is thus one of the recondite objects of the sacrifice to assign a portion of it as the share of the evil power so as to enable the Holy Spirit to rise on high, as symbolized in the rearing up of the Tabernacle.

'Observe that at the moment when the Tabernacle was erected, as also when the Temple (in Jerusalem) was built, the "other side" was subjugated and removed from the world; and that when the Tabernacle was erected by the hand of Moses the upper and the lower Tabernacles were erected together. Hence it is written: "And Moses reared

up the tabernacle", signifying that the Tabernacle below was raised by Moses, as it were, to the height of heights; he raised up, in a sense, that which was fallen and lying low. The same will happen in the days to come, of which it is written: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos IX, 11). [240a] Observe that when Moses erected the Tabernacle, another Tabernacle, to wit, the celestial one, hidden and undisclosed, was simultaneously erected; and it was by the force of that upper Tabernacle that the lower one was made and held firm. As it was the hand of Moses that erected the lower Tabernacle, so was it the "grade" of Moses that simultaneously erected the celestial one. This is proved from the words: "And Moses reared up the (*eth*) tabernacle", where the particle *eth* signifies a twin Tabernacle.'

R. Jose said: 'How can Scripture say AND MOSES REARED UP THE TABERNACLE, seeing that that passage speaks of the setting up of its several parts, whilst the term "rearing-up" can only mean the completion of the whole by putting together of all its parts?' Said R. Isaac: 'Moses first set up the three sides of the Tabernacle, whereby the evil power was partly subjugated, and then completed the fourth side, so that the evil power was completely subjugated: a work that could only be done by Moses, and by no one else.

'Observe, that when HE LAID ITS SOCKETS, Samael was shaken out of his place, together with his forty chariot-legions, and fled a distance of four hundred parasangs until he found refuge within the hidden abysmal cavern; and, as Moses "reared up its pillars" and made firm this "side",' the pillars of the "other side" were loosened and fell down.' R. Isaac further discoursed on the verse: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos IX, 11). 'It speaks of the day', he said, 'when the Almighty will execute divine justice upon the world and will visit their deeds upon the wicked of the world. For the Community of Israel cannot rise from the dust so long as the sinners from among Israel exist in the world. Thus the previous verse says: "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, that say: The evil shall not overtake nor

confront us" (*Ibid.* 10); and this is immediately followed by the verse, saying: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle . . . and close up their breaches, and I will raise up its ruins", where the plural "their" breaches can only point to "the sinners of My people" who form breaches in Israel, and so when "the sinners of My people shall die by the sword" those "breaches" will be closed up; "and I will raise up its ruins", to wit, the ruins of the tabernacle of David which was laid into ruins what time the wicked kingdom obtained dominion in the world. For, as we have learnt, of the two powers, as the one gathers strength the other languishes; as the one is filled the other is laid waste. So, until that day the wicked kingdom will be in power, but on that day the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise up the Holy Kingdom and "will raise up its ruins, and will build it as in the days of old" (*Ibid.*). This last is in allusion to: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, etc." (Isa. XXX, 26).

'AND MOSES REARED UP THE TABERNACLE, to wit, AND LAID ITS SOCKETS as a support underneath, and to enable the doors to revolve. "He laid them"; that is, he made them very firm, and at the same time the pillars of the "other side" were removed. Now we read: "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem; who said: Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. CXXXVII, 7). But God will in the future build the foundations of Jerusalem out of another substance which will prevail against all, to wit, out of sapphires, as it says, "and (I will) lay thy foundations with sapphires" (Isa. LV, 11). For these form firm and solid foundations without any weakness such as was in the former foundations. Over those stones [240b] of the former foundations other nations could prevail, inasmuch as they lacked the light supernal; but these will possess the radiation from the supernal light and will be embedded in the abyss so that no one will be able to loosen them. These are the sapphires that will shed their light above and below. Nor should we think that the former foundations will then be discarded, for it is written: "Behold, I will set

thy stones in antimony (*pukh*)", the term "set" (*marbitz*) signifying the repairing of the old broken stones. There are certain stones called *pukh;* the reason—so said R. Eleazar—only being known to the "reapers in the field". For we must not think for a moment that the stones of the foundations of Zion and Jerusalem fell into the power of the nations. In truth, they did not burn them, nor were they burnt, but they were all hidden and treasured up by the Holy One, blessed be He, without the loss of a single stone, and when God will again establish Jerusalem in its place, the ancient foundation-stones will return to their former positions; and no other (al. evil) eye will be able to rest on them save an eye painted with antimony (*pukh*). With such an eye one will be enabled to behold all the stones and foundations of Jerusalem set aright in their places. Similarly, all the other precious stones and stone edifices will be reared up in their former positions. Then "they shall see eye to eye the Lord returning[1] (to) Zion" (*Ibid.* LII, 8). Scripture speaks of the "Lord returning" for the reason that when other nations obtain rule over Zion, God removes her, as it were, and places her on high; but then He will restore her to her own place. Observe that if a thing is too bright for the eye to behold, the eye may yet look upon it if it is painted with certain substances. Hence, "Behold, I will set thy stones in *pukh*".[2] Observe also that all the former foundations will in the future be in their former positions and the sapphire stones will be placed around them. Of the time that God will restore His House it is written: "He will swallow up death for ever" (*Ibid.* XXV, 8); it will not be as at the time when Moses reared up the Tabernacle, but for ever and for all generations. The Holy One, blessed be He, will then establish the Community of Israel, will raise up the pillars and the pins, and all the beams of the Sanctuary in their proper setting to endure for evermore. The "other side" will be swallowed up for ever: "And the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it" (*Ibid.*).

[1] The Zohar takes here the verb *shub* (returning) in a transitive sense. [2] i.e. owing to the intense brilliancy of the stones, the eye could only look at them when shaded by certain paints like *pukh* (antimony).

AND MOSES REARED UP THE TABERNACLE, AND LAID (*vayiten*) ITS SOCKETS. At the time when these pillars and supports were put into their places, the pillars and supports of the evil side were loosened and swept away from their places. Moses, as we have learnt, saw the wicked Samael advancing towards him with intent to bring accusations against him. But he overpowered him and bound him in fetters, and then reared up the tabernacle, and fixed its sockets. The term *vayiten* (and he laid) indicates the use of intense force, for no other man but Moses would have been able to overcome this antagonist and to fix the foundations in their place. It was on the first of Nisan that the Tabernacle was reared up, a season when the evil powers are let loose in the world; for in the days of Nisan, as the saying goes, "even when the ox has his head in the fodder basket, go up the roof".[1] Moses saw Samael going round and round him to confuse him, but he overpowered him. And whilst he began to set firmly the Tabernacle below, a corresponding work was begun [241*a*] on high; there was opposite the earthly Tabernacle a heavenly Tabernacle, hidden and undisclosed, that radiated light on all sides, illuminating all the worlds. R. Jose asked R. Simeon: 'How is it that Scripture seems to speak of three Tabernacles, in that it says: "And on the day that the *tabernacle* was reared up the cloud covered the *tabernacle*, even the tent of the testimony; and at even there was upon the *tabernacle* as it were the appearance of fire, until morning" (Num. IX, 15)? And further, why "tabernacle" rather than "house", inasmuch as a house was needed rather than a temporary abode?' R. Simeon prefaced his reply with the verse: "Thus saith the Lord: The heaven is my throne, etc." (Isa. LXVI, 1). 'Observe', he said, 'that the Holy One, blessed be He, found delight in Israel as His inheritance and portion, brought them near to Himself, and divided them into certain grades after the celestial model, so as to bring into one complete whole all the worlds, both the upper and the lower. Thus "the heaven is my throne" indicates the firmament wherein Jacob dwells, an exalted image, as it were, of the most high Divine Throne;[2]

[1] T. P. Pesahim, 112*b*. [2] Al. "an exalted throne for the supernal sacred form."

"And the earth is My footstool", to wit, the firmament where King David abides to feast on the resplendency of the luminous glass; and since this resplendency is designed to be diffused downwards, the term "My footstool" is used. "The house that ye may build unto me" alludes to the Temple; and "the place that may be my resting-place" speaks of the Holy of Holies of the lower Temple. Now observe that all the time that the Israelites wandered in the desert they possessed a Tabernacle, which remained in existence until they came to Shiloh. This, then, is the allusion of the threefold mention of the word "tabernacle", that it went from one place to another, carrying a trail of light through all, but it was not a permanent resting-place. This only came about when the Temple was built in the days of King Solomon. Then was there indeed rest, both in the upper world and the lower; there were no more journeyings from place to place. The difference between "tabernacle" and "house" may be illustrated thus. In regard to the former we have to imagine a king who comes to visit his friend without bringing with him all his retinue, but only a few attendants, so as not to put his friend to trouble. But a "house" is a place where he comes to abide accompanied by his full retinue. The Temple, then, was designed as an ever-enduring resting-place for all the legions, all the symbols, all the solemn works, on the model of the celestial Temple; but the Tabernacle was the same, only on a small scale.

'Observe that when Moses was commanded to make the Tabernacle, he could not comprehend its design until God showed him an exact replica of every single part, a replica in white fire, in black fire, in red fire, and in green fire. Scripture thus says: "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which is being shown thee in the mount" (Ex. XXV, 40). Still Moses found the work difficult, and though he was shown it eye to eye, as it were, he was reluctant to undertake it. Now it cannot be that he lacked the skill or the knowledge for the work, for though Bezalel and Oholiab and the others with them did not see what Moses saw, yet it is written of them: "And Moses saw all the work, and, behold, they

had done it, etc." (Ex. XXXIX, 43). How much more, then, was Moses able to accomplish it! But the truth is that though Moses withdrew himself from the work of the Tabernacle, yet was the whole work done by his direction and under his supervision. Hence we read, "And see that *thou* make". According to an alternative exposition, Moses withdrew himself from the work of the Tabernacle, preferring to make way for someone else. So God said to him: [241b] "See, I have called by name Bezalel . . . I have appointed with him Oholiab" (*Ibid.* XXXI, 1–6); and we read further: "And Bezalel and Oholiab and every wise-hearted man shall work" (*Ibid.* XXXVI, 1). For all that, seeing that the work was accomplished by and under his direction, it was as though he himself had done it. Moreover, it is the finishing of a work which is the decisive factor, and therefore we read: "And *Moses* reared up the tabernacle"; all those wise-hearted men attempted to rear it up but could not, the honour being left for Moses.'

AND MOSES REARED UP THE TABERNACLE. R. Judah began a discourse on the verse: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; though I have fallen, I have arisen, etc." (Micah VII, 8). 'It is the Community of Israel that says this', he said, 'in regard to the enmity of the wicked kingdom against the holy kingdom. "Though I have fallen" she says, "I have arisen", which is not so with any other kingdom, which once it falls never rises again. But the Community of Israel will rise again as she has risen before other times. She had fallen many times, was driven into exile, dwelt among enemies, and nations arose against Israel in an attempt to exterminate them, as it says: "They hold crafty converse against thy people. . . . They have said: Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation" (Ps. LXXXIII, 45). Yet, though all nations rose against them, God did not leave them in their hands, and if they did fall it was to rise again. And so at that future time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise her from the dust of the exile, the Community of Israel will say: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; though I am fallen, I shall arise". Thus Israel arose from

the Egyptian exile from which Moses brought them out with all the miracles and mighty deeds that the Almighty wrought for them. Hence it is written: "And Moses reared up the tabernacle", signifying that it was raised by Moses every time.'

R. Simeon discoursed in this connection on the verse: "When those went these went, and when those stood these stood" (Ezek. I, 21). 'That means', he said, 'that when the *Ḥayoth* (living creatures) went the *Ofanim* (Wheels) also went, as we read, "and when the *Ḥayoth* went the *Ofanim* went hard by them" (*Ibid.* 19). For the movements of the *Ofanim* are only induced by the movements of the *Ḥayoth*, nor can they pause independently of the *Ḥayoth*, for the two move together as one. Now the celestial gate of the east is provided with twenty-four openings guarded by twenty-four sentinels who are surrounded by a flaming fire. There are at the entrance of the gate twenty-four sockets supporting twenty-four pillars. These pillars remain in their place and do not soar into space; they are thus designated "standing ones", in the verse: "I will give thee a place to walk among these standing ones" (Zech. III, 7). And as long as those pillars remain immobile those that are above them go to and fro through the world, survey things, and whatever they overhear they carry up on high. So Scripture says: "For a bird of the air shall carry the voice" (Eccles. X, 20). Now observe that the *Ofanim* (Wheels) are carried by the *Ḥayoth* (living creatures). [242a] For that which is of a higher grade, though it seems to be carried by that which is of a lower grade, really carries it. It was the same with the Ark, which also carried its carriers.[1] We must distinguish between the *Ḥayah*, "the spirit of which was in the *Ofanim*", and the *Ḥayoth*, with which the *Ofanim* went. This one turned towards all four quarters of the globe. In regard to this it says: "This is the *Ḥayah* that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar" (*Ibid.* X, 20); it is the same which forms a throne to the likeness of Man, and is below the superior holy *Ḥayoth*. For they are in grades, one above the other. The Throne immediately underneath the God of Israel is in the form of

[1] T. B. Sotah, 35a.

Jacob, and the Throne below in that of David; this is the one that turns to the four corners of the world. It follows that the spirit of the highest diffuses through the lower, and directs and guides the whole. There was similar direction in the lower world. Just as in connection with the upper world we read that "the spirit of the *Ḥayah* is in the *Ofanim*", so of the lower world it is written, "And Moses reared up the tabernacle", he being the guiding spirit below; wherefore it is written: "And he reared up, fixed, put."

'Observe that Moses set up the Tabernacle in the recondite spirit of his own high grade; but the Temple that Solomon built was the recondite expression of the River that went forth from Eden, signifying homely peace and rest. The Tabernacle expressed love and affection, but not restfulness, whereas the Temple of Solomon meant rest, as it says, "he shall be a man of rest" (1 Chron. XXII, 9). Each one builded according to his own grade.

'Moses first firmly established in the side of holiness the central Point which was hid in darkness and buried, and afterwards all the rest, which is but the enlargement of this Point. And if this Point had not been established first, all that spread from it could not have been established. This is referred to in the words, "he reared up the tabernacle". Moses then "set up its sockets" on either side to the number of a hundred, as it says, "a hundred talents, a talent for a socket" (Ex. XXXVIII, 27). [242b] As already said, here it is not written "and he reared up", but "he laid" (*vayiten*) the sockets, for the reason that over above them there were placed other grades, riding one upon the other, as it were. At the moment when the central Point was reared up the evil power sank, but it was not wiped out altogether. That will come to pass in the future, as already said. As the one thus rose, so the other sank. When "he set up its sockets", the "holy side" began to gather force, whilst the forces of the "other side" plunged into the cavern of the Abyss. Had Israel not sinned, the evil powers could never more exercise sway in the world. But since Israel sinned, and thereby drew unto them the "other side" as of old, there is no remedy save to assign him his portion, esoterically speaking, in the

sacrifices and libation-offerings. For this reason the burnt-offering is completely consumed in fire, so that the "other side" may be subjugated and the holy side may rise. Then the text repeats, "and he *put in* the bars thereof and he *reared up* its pillars", so that there should be rearing-up both at the beginning and the end, whereby the side of holiness was upraised and the evil side was weakened and forced down.

'The starting-point of the grades of the evil side, which is the beginning of the outside grade, assumes the shape of the head of a male riding on a camel. This is the starting-point of a thick darkness which spreads out. The darkness is caused by a smoke issuing in the midst of the fury of the evil side, which fury becomes intensified, begetting other furies, and furies upon furies, one riding on top of the other, and representing the male and the female principles. When the smoke begins to spread, through the pressure of the nucleus, it takes the form of a winding and dangerous serpent. The first result of its spreading is a grade which, after much moving up and down, settles into the grade called "shadow", being a shadow on the place called "death"; and when the two are combined they are called "the shadow of death". The lower and outer starting-point is enveloped in darkness and is far removed from the holy and central Point. The darkness round the lower point is black and yet not black, having no hue which can be discerned by the eye. It is of the same kind that prevailed in Egypt, regarding which it says: "they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days" (Ex. x, 23); also, "even darkness which may be felt" (*Ibid.* 21). [243*a*] Now this starting-point was ramified into seven grades. The first grade is a darkness that displays three hues: that of smoke, of fire, and that of blackness. The smoky hue is the apparition of the evil seducer who seduces mankind to stray from the path and to be rebellious. In allusion to such it is written: "There shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god" (Ps. LXXXI, 9). The first half of the verse refers to the male principle, the second to the female principle. The fiery view is that aspect of the evil power which brings

about slaughter, bloodshed, and destruction amongst mankind. For there is in the world causeless and purposeless slaughter and bloodshed, as well as slaughter and bloodshed in the course of war. The first proceeds from the male principle of the evil powers, the second from the female principle. The male aspect is concerned in mere bloodshed, whereas the female aspect is at the root of mutual wars of people against people; and all such wars proceed from the female principle. Finally, the black hue is the apparition of the evil power that presides over the infliction of wounds and bruises on the bodies of men as well as over crucifixions and strangulations. [243*b*]

'The second grade emerges out of the darkness and branches out into three hundred separate directions, although they all are absorbed within each other, as it were. They roam abroad to inflict evil on the world, to execute justice openly for sins committed by men in secret.

'The third grade is as a firmament that overspreads all the other grades. [244*a*] The fourth grade is like a ruddy conflagration, and is also concerned with the shedding of blood among men. It gives the authority to the lower powers for the slaying of mankind. It is to the lower powers in the relation of soul to body. For the soul cannot act save through the medium of body. It is the aspect of the male, which can only act through the female principle, to wit, the lower powers.'[1] [269*a*]

THEN THE CLOUD COVERED THE TENT OF MEETING, whereby the Shekinah dwelt on the earth, and the unclean spirit, designated "end of all flesh", passed out of the world and disappeared into the cavern of the great abyss. The Holy Spirit had thus sole sway over the world, as Scripture says: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting". It is further written: AND MOSES WAS NOT ABLE TO ENTER INTO THE TENT OF MEETING, BECAUSE THE CLOUD ABODE THEREON, in other words, because the Holy Spirit hovered

[1] Here follows in the text a long dissertation on the *Hekaloth* (temples), or halls of the angels, which is not based on an exposition of the Scriptures.

over the world and the unclean spirit passed out. The wicked, however, draw him again into the world, and if not for them he would completely disappear. But in the days to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause him to pass completely out of the world, as Scripture says: "He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. xxv, 8); also, "and (I will cause) the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zech. xiii, 3). Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen. "The Lord will reign for ever."

LEVITICUS

VAYIḲRA

(Lev. I, 1–VI, 7)

R. Eleazar began here with the verse, "Ask thee a sign[1] of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth or in the height above" (Isa. VII, 11). He said: 'We have compared the former with the latter generations, and found that the former were conversant with a higher wisdom by which they knew how to combine the letters that were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and even the sinners of Israel knew a deep wisdom contained in the letters and the difference between higher and lower letters, and how to do things with them in this world. For every letter that was transmitted to Moses used to ascend as a crown upon the heads of the holy celestial Ḥayyoth, who with them flitted through the ether which is under the refined and unknowable supernal ether. There were large letters and small letters; the large letters came from the most high and hidden Temple (*hekhal*) and the smaller letters from another lower Temple; and both kinds were transmitted to Moses on Sinai, along with their occult combinations.[2] [2*b*]

AND HE CALLED UNTO MOSES, AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO HIM OUT OF THE TENT OF MEETING, SAYING. R. Ḥiya connected this with the verse, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my bride, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk, eat, O friends, etc." 'The first part of this verse', he said, 'does not seem to accord with the second. If a man invites another to eat, it is while the food is spread before him, not after he has eaten himself. The explanation, however, is this. On the day when the Tabernacle was set up on earth, another Tabernacle was set up aloft, and that day was one of joy to the Holy One, blessed be He. Moses, however, at that time,

[1] The Hebrew word is *oth*, which in Talmudic Hebrew commonly means "letter". [2] The rest of this passage up to 3*b* ["And he called. . ."] deals mainly with the occult powers of various letters. The whole is omitted from the editiones majores of Mantua, Cremona, and Lublin.

"was not able to enter the tent of meeting" (Ex. XL, 35), whereupon God said, "The Tabernacle has been raised by the hand of Moses, and shall he remain outside?" Straightway, therefore, He called to Moses, saying, Moses, how does one dedicate a house? With a banquet, is it not? Therefore, "when any man of you offereth an oblation unto the Lord", etc. The verse can also be explained in the same connection as follows. The "garden" is the higher Garden of Eden, "My sister, my bride" is the Community of Israel, whose espousals were on that day consummated, all being blessed from the water of the supernal stream. Hence it says "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, etc.", [4a] while the words "eat, O friends, etc." indicate that all those beneath and all the branches were blessed and nourished when the others were blessed above. And wherewith are they all blessed and regaled? With the odour of the sacrifice. It was when the Community of Israel came down to make her abode on earth that God proclaimed this verse, because there was then blessing and joy in all worlds, and She was firmly established as a source of blessing to all. For when those Six [grades] are blessed, then all worlds are blessed, both below and above, and Israel draw blessing from all of them.' R. Isaac said that the Holy One, blessed be He, was espoused to the Community of Israel only at the time when those Six drank their fill of the "stream that never fails". R. Judah said that the words, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved", were addressed to all the lords of the loud battle-shout, who were then established and blessed because they all partook of the banquet of the King. For when the King came rejoicing he rejoiced the Matrona, and then they all ate and were glad. R. Abba said that the terms "friends" and "beloved" refer to the Six mentioned, who were bidden to drink and drink abundantly from that wine which slakes the thirst of all. R. Eleazar said that these terms refer to all the lower orders, since when those Six are blessed all beneath are blessed. R. Simeon said: 'All these explanations are good, but the real truth is that "friends" refers to those above and "beloved" to those below.' 'Who', asked R. Eleazar, 'are those above and those below?' 'This is a good question',

he replied. 'Those in the higher realm who are fast friends and never separate are called "friends", whereas those below who unite only at certain times are called "beloved ones". Note that those in the higher realm are bidden only to eat and not to drink. For he who already has a cask of wine needs something to eat with it, and since in that realm is the precious "wine of creation", they are invited to eat, whereas those below who require liquid are invited to drink, for all shoots require to be watered from the deep stream.' Said R. Eleazar to him: 'The term "beloved" is the more endearing of the two: why, then, is it applied to those below?' He replied: 'Those who yearn for one another, but are not always together, are called "beloved", whereas those who are always together and never hidden or separated from one another are called "friends". In the inseparableness of the one set and the yearning of the other lies the completeness of the whole, for the blessing of the Community of Israel and the joy of all worlds.' R. Hizkiah applied the verse to the sacrifices, because they are the banquet which is brought before the King, and the accusers also partake of it and are satisfied, and so joy is diffused everywhere. R. Aha applied the verse to the time when the Shekinah entered the Tabernacle, blessing and joy being then universally diffused, and Israel being perfected and joined [4b] to the Holy One, blessed be He, on earth, as it is written, "and they shall make me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them" (Ex. XXV, 8).

AND HE CALLED UNTO MOSES. R. Simeon connected this with the verse, "The flowers appear in the land, the time of the singing of birds (*zamir*) is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land" (S.S. II, 12). 'Why', he said, 'is the word "land" repeated in this verse? The reason is that the "flowers" here are the "shoots" which God plucked up and planted in another place, and whose blossoms appear on the "earth"—that earth which is fitly blessed by them, the holy earth, the supernal earth, the true earth. Then, too, the time of cutting-off (*zamir*) has drawn near, the time to destroy the dominion of the nations over Israel, when the Tabernacle was set up, "and the voice of the turtle was heard

in our land", to wit, in the land which Joshua conquered for Israel. When the Tabernacle was set up, Moses stood outside, not venturing to enter without permission, until "one called unto Moses". Who was it that called? She to whom the house belonged, the bride who had authority over all the house.'

AND THE LORD SPAKE TO HIM. This was He that is called Voice, and to whom Moses attached himself. R. Eleazar quoted here the verse: "Wherefore when I came was there no man, when I called was there none to answer?" (Isa. L, 2). 'Happy are Israel', he said, 'in that wherever they congregate God is among them and takes pride in them, as it says, "Israel in whom I will be glorified" (*Ibid.* XLIX, 3). Nay more, Israel attain to perfect faith on earth and Israel consummate the Holy Name. For when Israel are blameless in their conduct the Holy Name, so to speak, is whole, but when Israel are faulty in their conduct on earth, the Holy Name, if one may say so, is not whole above. For so we have learnt: "One went up and the other went down. The supernal Israel ascended aloft, the Community of Israel came down to earth. So they were parted from one another, and the Holy Name was left incomplete"; and all because the Community of Israel is in exile. Yet though Israel are in exile, the Holy One, blessed be He, is to be found among them, and precedes them to the synagogue, where he exclaims: "Return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings" (Jer. III, 22). And if none heed, then God says: "Wherefore when I came was there no man, when I called was there none to answer?" So on the day when the Tabernacle was completed God came at once and rested thereon and straightway "called unto Moses and spake to him from the tent of meeting, saying". He made known to him how Israel would sin and how this tent of meeting would be "pledged"[1] for their sins and would not endure. There was, however, a remedy for this: "if a man should bring an offering to the Lord".'

[1] A play on the words *mischan*, "tent", and *mashcen* (Aramaic), "pledge".

R. Hizkiah once, when in the company of R. Simeon, asked him [5a] what was the precise meaning of the term *korban* (offering). He replied: 'As is well known to the Companions, it means their "drawing near".[1] It refers to those holy Crowns which are all knit together and drawn near to one another until they all form a perfect unity to make whole the Holy Name. Hence it is written, "a *korban* to *YHVH*", meaning that the drawing near of those Crowns is to *YHVH* to unify properly the Holy Name so that mercy should be shown to all worlds, and rigour should not be aroused. Hence the name *YHVH* is used (in connection with the sacrifices), and not the name *Elohim*.' Said R. Hizkiah: 'How glad I am that I asked this question, so as to receive such an explanation. But is it not written, "The sacrifices of *Elohim* are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, *Elohim*, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. LI, 18)?' He replied: 'It does not say here "offering" (*korban*), but "sacrifices" (*zibehe*). It is for this reason that the sacrifices were killed on the north side of the altar, because that is the side of *Geburah*, which is designated *Elohim*, the purpose being to soften and break the spirit of severity, so that mercy may obtain the upper hand. It is meet, therefore, that a man should stand by the altar with a contrite spirit and repent of his misdeeds so that that stern spirit may be softened and mercy prevail over severity.'

WHEN ANY MAN OF YOU OFFERETH AN OBLATION UNTO THE LORD. R. Eleazar said: 'The words "of you" are inserted here to show that the word "man" (*adam*) does not refer to Adam, who also brought a sacrifice when God created the world, as explained elsewhere.' Said R. Simeon to him: 'You are quite right.' R. Abba discoursed here on the Psalm commencing: "A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah" (Ps. XLVIII). 'This psalm', he said, 'surpasses all the other hymns of praise, sung by the sons of Korah, being hymn upon hymn, a hymn with two facets, song and psalm. It was sung in praise of the Community of Israel. Wherein lies this praise? In the words, "Great is the Lord and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, in his holy mountain".

[1] From *karab*, to draw near.

For when is the Holy One, blessed be He, called great? When the Community of Israel is with Him; He is great "in the city of our God". We learn from this that the King without the Matrona is no king, nor is He great nor highly praised. Hence, whoever being male is without his female is bereft of all his praises and is not included in the category of "man", nor is he even worthy to be blessed. (So in the book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder we find it stated that Job was called "great" (Job 1, 3) only because of his wife, who was God-fearing like himself.) The praise of their espousals is contained in the next words, "Beautiful in elevation", the one referring to the Holy One, blesssed be He, and the other to the *Ẓaddik*, this union being "the joy of the whole earth". "God hath made himself known in her palaces for a refuge": these are *Neẓaḥ* and *Hod*, [5*b*] in which all blessings and joy are stored up, and from whence they issue through the agency of that grade which is called *Ẓaddik*. "For lo, the kings assembled themselves, they passed by together" these are all the crowns of the King together; and from this point the Psalm has a different reference.

'When a man rectifies his actions by means of the offering, all is firmly established and knit together in complete unity, as it is written, "when a man *brings near*", that is, unites what should be united.'

WHEN ANY MAN OF YOU OFFERETH. The term "man" (*adam*) excludes one who is not married, his offering being no offering and blessings not resting on him, either above or below. For he is deficient and is called "blemished", and nothing blemished may approach the altar. The proof is in the fate of Nadab and Abihu. Said R. Abba: 'The incense is the most excellent of all offerings, for through it, are blessed both those above and those below. Therefore they were not worthy to bring this offering, because they were not married. It may still be asked, however, why were they burnt? The following parable will explain. A man came before the queen to inform her that the king intended to visit her and enjoy her company. He then presented himself to the king, who saw that he was physically defective. Said the king: "It comports not with my dignity that through the agency of this cripple I should be presented to the queen." Meanwhile the queen had prepared the room for the king. When she saw that the king was prevented from coming to her by that man, she ordered him to be put to death. So when Nadab and Abihu took the incense, the Matrona saw and rejoiced and prepared to meet the King. When the King, however, saw that they were defective, he did not wish to be introduced to her through them, and kept aloof. When the Matrona saw that through them the King kept aloof, straightway "a fire went forth from the Lord and consumed them". All this because a man who is not married is defective, and the holiness of the King flees from him.'

OF THE CATTLE. This is the general term. OF THE HERD AND OF THE FLOCK: these are the particular terms. The Scripture particularises those animals which are proper to eat. Those which are not proper to eat may not be brought as an offering. The difference between those that are proper and those that are not proper to eat is stated elsewhere.

IF HIS OBLATION BE A BURNT OFFERING. R. Hiya cited here the verse: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, said the Lord" (Isa. LV, 8). 'The Thought of God', he said, 'is the fountain-head of all, and from that Thought spread forth ways and paths in which the Holy Name might be found and fittingly established. From that Thought, too, issued the stream of the Garden of Eden to water all. On that Thought depend all beings above and below, and from that Thought come the Written and the Oral Torahs. The thought of man is also the fountain-head of his life, and from it stretch ways and paths to pervert his ways in this world and in the next. From that thought issues the defilement of the evil inclination to work harm to him and to all, and from it come error and iniquity and presumptuous sin, idolatry, fornication and bloodshed; wherefore [6*a*] it says, "my thoughts are not as your thoughts". Hence it says, first of all, "If his oblation be a burnt-offering", for the "burnt-offering" (*'olah*) has reference to "that which goeth up"

('*olah*) on the heart, to wit the thought, and therefore the first offering mentioned is the burnt-offering.'

R. Aha was once walking in company with R. Judah. As they were going along, R. Judah said: 'We have learnt that the "Virgin of Israel" is blessed from seven sources; yet the Scripture says, in reference to her, "And do thou, O son of man, raise a lament over the virgin of Israel",[1] and what is even worse, "The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise" (Amos v, 2). It is true that this last verse has been explained by all the Companions as a message of comfort.[2] This, however, can hardly be accepted, as the prophet himself calls it a lamentation (v. 1).' Said R. Aha: 'I, too, have been perplexed with the same difficulty. I once came before R. Simeon looking very troubled. He said to me: "Your face shows that there is something on your mind." I said: "Truly my mind is as sad as my face." He said to me: "Tell me what it is." I said: "It is written, 'The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise'. If a man is angry with his wife and she leaves him, shall she never return? If so, alas for the children who have been sent away with her!" He said to me: "Are you not content with what the Companions have said?" I replied: "I have heard their explanation, that it is really a message of comfort, but it does not satisfy me." He said: "What the Companions have said is quite right as far as it goes, but there is more to be said. Alas for the generation when the shepherds are gone and the sheep stray without knowing whither they are going! Truly this verse requires understanding, but it is all plain to those who can interpret the Torah fittingly. See now. In all the other exiles of Israel a term was set, at the end of which Israel returned to God and the Virgin of Israel came back to her place. But this last exile is not so, for she shall not return as on previous occasions, as is proved by this verse which says, 'The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall rise no more.' Note that it is not written,

[1] This verse is not found in our text. Apparently the Zohar meant it for a paraphrase of Ezek. XIX, 1, "And do thou raise a lamentation over the princes of Israel".

[2] In T. B. Berachoth, the verse is explained thus: "She has fallen, but shall no more; rise, O virgin of Israel."

'I shall not raise her any more'. Imagine a king who was wroth with his queen and banished her from his palace for a certain time. When that time arrived she at once returned to the king. So it happened several times. Finally, however, she was banished from the king's palace for a very long time. Said the king: 'This time is not like the other times when she came back to me. This time I shall go with all my followers to find her.' When he came to her he found her in the dust. [6b] Seeing her thus humiliated and yearning once more for her, the king took her by the hand, raised her up, and brought her to his palace, and swore to her that he would never part from her again. So the Community of Israel, on all previous occasions in which she was in exile, when the appointed time came, used to return of herself to the King; but in this exile the Holy One, blessed be He, will himself take her by the hand and raise her and comfort her and restore her to his palace. So it is written: 'In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen' (Amos IX, 11), the 'tabernacle of David' being identical with the 'Virgin of Israel'." Said R. Judah: 'Truly thou hast comforted and satisfied me, and this is the truth of the matter. And it reminds me of something similar which I had forgotten, of a saying of R. Jose, that the Holy One, blessed be He, will one day make proclamation concerning the Community of Israel, saying "Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit thee down, Jerusalem" (Isa. LII, 2), like a man taking his neighbour by the hand and saying, Pull yourself together, rise.' Said R. Aha to him: 'All the prophets use similar language. Thus it is written, "Arise, shine forth, for thy light is come", meaning that the King is here to be reconciled with her. And again, "Behold thy king cometh unto thee" (Zech. IX, 9): He shall come to thee to comfort thee, to raise thee, to repay thee all, to take thee into His palace and to espouse thee for evermore, as it is written: "And I shall betroth thee for ever" (Hos. II, 19).'

As they went along they saw R. Abba approaching. They said: 'Here comes a master of wisdom; let us greet the Shekinah.' When, however, they came up, he himself slipped off the saddle and came down to the ground by them. He

then began to discourse on the verse: "And there was the voice of a trumpet (*shofar*) exceedingly loud" (Ex. XIX, 16). "The ancient scribes', he said, 'differed as to the correct intonation of this verse. Some punctuated it so as to read, "And there was a voice, the trumpet exceeding strong", making the voice and the trumpet two things, the trumpet being the signal for slaves to go forth to everlasting freedom. Some, again, made the voice and the trumpet one, this being the great voice whence issued the Torah, which is called "strong", because there is no word in the Torah so apparently weak or feeble which when properly studied will not be found as strong as a hammer breaking the rock. [7a] It is also written in the same passage: "Moses spake and God answered him by a voice" (*Ibid.* 19). This voice, as has been elsewhere explained, is the voice of Moses, the Voice to which Moses attached himself. It may be asked, does it not say further on that "God spoke" (*Ibid.* XX, 1), and not Moses? Some explain that the reason was because the people said to Moses: "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us" (*Ibid.* 19). But, in fact, there is no word in the Torah which Moses spoke on his own authority. Hence it says, "Moses spoke" with his own voice, "and God answered him with that mighty Voice", confirming what he said.'

They asked R. Abba to continue, so he went on with the verse: "But if a priest's daughter be a widow or divorced and have no child", etc. (Lev. XXII, 13). 'Blessed', he said, 'is the portion of Israel above that of all other nations, because God created the world only for their sake, that they might receive the Law on Mount Sinai and become pure and righteous in His sight. Now, when this world was made after the supernal pattern and that first man was planted in the earth whose stature reached to the heaven, God desired to draw down a holy soul from heaven to earth in order that they might be joined and linked together. And therefore "God formed man dust from the ground", etc. (Gen. II, 7), that he might join one with the other and himself be perfect. And therefore God created man male and female that he might be perfect. For when is man called complete after the supernal pattern? When he is joined with his mate in unity, in joy, and in affection, and there issue from their union a son and a daughter. Then is man complete below like the Holy Name above, and the Holy Name is attached to him. But if a man is not willing to complete the Holy Name below, it were better for him that he had not been born, for he has no portion at all in the Holy Name, and when his soul leaves him it never joins him again, because he diminished the likeness of his Master, until it has been wholly rectified, as it is written: "But if a priest's daughter be a widow or divorced", etc. "The priest's daughter" is the holy soul, called "daughter of the king", who issues from the union of the King and the Matrona, and is therefore the lower body consisting of male and female, there being a corresponding soul above. "If she shall be widowed" from that body to which she was united, "or divorced" from that portion of the Holy Name, because "she has no seed" to resemble therewith that which is above and to be linked to the Holy Name, then "she shall return" to be restored to her original state. Thereupon "she shall return to her father's house", that is, to the Holy One, blessed be He, "as in her youth", as at first, and "she shall eat of her father's bread", to partake of the delights of the King. But thenceforth "there shall no stranger eat thereof", that is, one who has not established the Holy Name below and who has no portion therein; such a one has no portion in the supernal delight wherein is true "eating", [7b] and which is still in the place where it was when the savour of the sacrifices used to ascend. For when there is food below there is food above; it is as though a king were to prepare a banquet for himself and another for his servants, but were not to eat till his servants ate. Hence the expression "sweet savour" (lit. savour of pleasantness)—savour for the servants, pleasantness for the Lord. Hence we have learnt that Israel feed their Father in heaven. And who are they that eat of the banquet of the King? Who if not the souls of the righteous?'

R. Abba further discoursed on the verse: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. CXXXIII, 1). 'Happy are Israel', he said, 'in

that God gave them in the charge of no chief or messenger, and they are attached to Him and He is attached to them. And from His love for them He called them servants, as it is written: "For unto me the children of Israel are servants" (Lev. XXV, 55); and He further called them children, as it is written, "Ye are children of the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1); and finally He called them brethren, as it is written, "For my brethren and companions' sakes" (Ps. CXXII, 8). And because He called them "brethren", He desired to make his abode with them and not leave them. Also we may take the word "brethren" to indicate the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Community of Israel. So in the exposition of the verse, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one", we have learnt that "one" signifies the Community of Israel who clings to the Holy One, blessed be He, since, as Rabbi Simeon said, the union of male and female is called "one", the Holy One, blessed be He, being called "one" only in the place where the Female also is, since the male without the female is called half the body, and half is not one. When, however, the two halves are united, they become one body and are called one. At the present day the Holy One, blessed be He, is not called "one". The inner reason is that the Community of Israel is in exile, and the Holy One, blessed be He, has ascended aloft and the union has been broken so that the Holy Name is not complete and is therefore not called "one". When will it be called "one"? When the Matrona will be again with the King and they shall be united, when, in the words of the prophet, "the kingdom shall belong to *YHVH*", the kingdom referring to the Community of Israel, to whom kingship is attached. Then "in that day shall the Lord (*YHVH*) be one and his name one" (Zech. XIV, 9). The verse continues: "It is like the precious oil upon the head that ran down upon the beard." This is the oil of the anointing of holiness which streams forth from the Ancient Holy One and which is found in that supernal stream which gives to the children the wherewithal to kindle the lights. That oil trickles on to the head of the King and from the head to the holy and venerable beard, and from there it streams on to all the garments of

splendour in which the King is arrayed, as it is written, "that came down upon the skirt of his garments". These are the Crowns of the King in which is found the Holy Name: and it is through them that all the bounty and all the joy of the various worlds come down to bless. And this "good oil" [8a] was not available until the time when the service from below mounted on high so that they met one another.'

R. Aha and R. Judah lifted up their hands and thanked R. Abba. R. Aha then discoursed on the verse: "But God (Elohim) came to Abimelech in a dream of the night" (Gen. XX, 3). 'We also find that "Elohim" came to Balaam (Num. XXII, 9). How is it that "Elohim" came to Gentiles and not to Israel? The truth is, however, that, as we have learnt, the word "Elohim" in these passages refers to the celestial Power that was in charge of Abimelech or Balaam. So, when we read that Elohim said to Abimelech, "I also know", etc. (Gen. XX, 6), we interpret thus: "Although one higher than I am knows, yet I also know". Hence he continued: "And I also withheld thee from sinning against me." There is really no sinning against a [mere] celestial Power, but what he meant was that through the sins of a people on earth their guardian Power above is weakened, and deposed from his authority. We learn from this that through the sins of mankind injury is inflicted above, as it says, "And through your transgression your mother was put away" (Isa. L, 1). Hence an offering (*korban*) had to be brought in order to bring near (*kareb*) the upper world and the lower after they had been separated through the sins of men.'

R. Abba and R. Judah then came and thanked R. Aha. R. Judah then followed with the text: "Serve ye the Lord with gladness" (Ps. C, 1). 'We have learnt', he said, 'that all service of God must be performed with gladness and zest, otherwise it is not perfect. Now how is this possible in the case of the offering, which is brought as a sign of man's repentance for transgressing the precepts of the law? With what face can such a man stand before God? Surely only with a contrite spirit and sorrowful heart. Where, then, is the joy and shouting? The truth is, however, that this was provided by the priests and Levites: rejoicing was carried out by the

priest because he is far from chastisement and must ever show a more joyful countenance than the rest of the people. The singing, again, was carried out by the Levites, whose function it was. So the priest stood by him [8b] and found suitable words to unify in joy the Holy Name, while the Levites broke out into song. At the present day, when there are no offerings, if a man sins and returns to his Master with bitterness of heart, with sorrow, with weeping and contrition, how is he to provide joy and singing? The answer is an esoteric one. We have learnt: "A man should enter the synagogue to the extent of two gateways and then pray." This alludes to the words of David: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates" (Ps. XXIV, 7). These are Maon and Machon, the which are far within, the beginning of the grades Kindness (*Ḥesed*) and Fear (*Paḥad*), and the gateways of the world. Therefore a man should in his prayer fix his mind on the Holy of Holies, which is the Holy Name, and then say his prayer. Others learn the same lesson thus: "Joy" is the Community of Israel, and Israel will one day come forth from the exile through this joy, as it is written, "For in joy ye shall go forth" (Isa. LV, 12), and therefore it says, "Serve ye the Lord with joy". It further says, "Come before him with song". This is the completion of the joy, for joy is in the heart and song in the mouth. This, then, is the fitting way for man to appear before his Master, and then it can be said to him, "Know that the Lord is God": he has now to unify the Holy Name and to link these two names so as to make them one, and this is the true service of the Holy One, blessed be He.' Said R. Aha and R. Abba to him: 'Assuredly it is so. Happy the righteous who study the Torah and know the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He.'

They accompanied R. Abba three miles. He quoted to them the verse: "But as for me, in the multitude of thy lovingkindness I will come into thy house", etc. (Ps. V, 8). 'This verse', he said, 'has been expounded to mean that before entering a house of prayer a man should consult Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who instituted prayers to the Holy One, blessed be He: Abraham as it is said, "I will come into thy house"; Isaac as it is said, "I will bow down toward thy holy temple"; Jacob as it says, "In thy fear". Of such a one it is written, "And he said to me, thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3).'

IF HIS OBLATION BE A BURNT OFFERING FROM THE HERD. R. Jose asked: 'Why should there be three kinds of burnt-offering—from the herd, from the flock, and from the fowl? Why is not one sufficient? The reason is that if a man can afford he brings an ox, and if he cannot afford an ox he brings a sheep, and if he cannot afford a sheep he brings a fowl; for God does not demand of a man more than he can perform.' R. Eleazar said: 'His offering was to correspond to his sin. A rich man puffed up with his wealth was to bring an ox, because his thoughts were likely to be the most sinful. A man of moderate means brought a sheep because he was not so prone to sin; while a poor man, who was the most timid of all, brought the smallest offering of all. And the offering of each was appraised by God at its true value.'

R. Eleazar asked R. Simeon, his father, the following question: 'We have learnt that famine comes to the world for three sins which are only found among the rich, because they are puffed up with their wealth, but not among the poor; how is it fair, [9a] then, that God should slay the poor (by famine) and not the rich, for now they will sin still more?' He replied: 'This is a good question, and the Companions have answered as follows. Of all the sons of man, none are so near to the Supreme King as those vessels which He uses, to wit, "a broken and contrite heart" (Ps. LI, 18), "he that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isa. LVII, 15). Now, when there is a famine and the poor are punished and suffer, and they weep and cry before the King, and God draws them nearer than ever, as it is written, "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted" (Ps. XXII, 25), God then visits the sin for which famine has come on the world. Woe, then, to the sinners who have caused this, when the King bestirs himself to take note of the voice of the poor. Heaven protect us from them and their vengeance, for so it is written, "I will surely hear his cry" (Ex. XXII, 23), "and my wrath shall wax hot, etc." (*Ibid.*).

'The offering of the poor man is a small one, because his heart is downcast, and therefore even if he harbours sinful thoughts he is forgiven because he is sufficiently punished by his own distress and that of his household. A rich man once brought an offering of two pigeons to the priest. On seeing them, the priest said: "This is not an offering for you." He went home very sad. His people asked him why he was so sad, and he said: "Because the priest would not take my offering." "What was it?" they said. He told them it was two pigeons. They said: "That is an offering for a poor man, not for you. You must bring a proper one." "What is that?" he asked. They replied: "An ox." "Is the mere thought of sin then so serious?" he said. "I vow that I will let no thought of sin enter my heart". From that day he used to spend the day in business, then go to bed at night, and on waking he used to call his brethren, and they taught him the Torah and he used to study it till daybreak. So, because he studied, they called him "the transformed Judah". One day R. Jesse the Elder found him dividing his money, half for the poor and half for merchandise to ship oversea, and after he had finished he sat down and studied the Torah.

'He expounded the verse: "And Saul said to the Kenites, etc." (2 Sam. xv, 6). 'The Kenites', he said, 'were the descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and were so called because they made for themselves a nest (*ken*) in the wilderness, in order to study the Torah; for the study of the Torah does not require luxuries or merchandise, but only labour day and night. Hence they left the luxuries of Jericho and removed to the wilderness. Now, of Jethro it is written, "And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God" (Ex. xviii, 12). This shows that his offering [9*b*] was highly esteemed in the sight of God, and therefore "Aaron and all the elders came to eat with Moses' father-in-law before God" (*Ibid.*); from which we learn that when one brings an offering with true devotion, God comes to meet him. Now the offering of a poor man is highly esteemed before God, because he brings two offerings: one the actual sacrifice, and the other his own flesh and blood, because, though he has nothing to eat himself, he yet brings

an offering. A poor man can bring a little flour and make atonement; for just as his own flesh and blood were burning (with hunger), so the flour is heated with the oil smeared on it. Here, too, we learn that any man may bring an offering on a baking-pan or a frying-pan because it is heated in the same way as he heated his flesh and blood with his evil passions and set all his limbs on fire. The essence of the offering is that it is analogous to the sin, and that a man should offer to God his desires and passions, for this is more acceptable than all. Blessed are the righteous that they bring this offering every day. Yet withal, the actual offering is better, because it brings blessings on all worlds.'

'He further discoursed on the verse: "Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, who dwelleth at Jerusalem, hallelujah" (Ps. cxxxv, 21). He said: 'Is the Lord blessed from Zion? Is He not blessed from the recondite supernal stream? What it means, however, is that the Lord is blessed when the Moon is illumined by the Sun and they draw near one another. Or again, it may mean that the place from which it is known that the Holy One, blessed be He, is blessed is Zion, as it is written: "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, etc." (Ps. cxxxiii, 3).' Said R. Jesse to him: 'Blessed art thou that thou hast attained to all this, and blessed are all those that study the Torah.'

IF HIS OBLATION BE A SACRIFICE OF PEACE OFFERINGS. R. Judah discoursed here on the verse: "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters" (Gen. i, 6). 'When God created the world', he said, 'He created seven firmaments above, and in each one stars and constellations and ministers to serve, and Chariots one above the other to take upon themselves the yoke of the kingship of their Master. Some have six wings, some four wings; some have four faces, some two faces, and some one face; some are of fire, some of water, and some of air. The firmaments envelop one another like the skins of an onion, and every firmament trembles from the fear of its Master by whose command it moves or stops. Over all is the Holy One, blessed be He, who sustains all in His power and might. Similarly there are seven

earths below, [10a] one higher than the other, the Land of Israel being the highest of all and Jerusalem being the highest point in the whole inhabited world. Our colleagues who dwell in the South have seen all this in the books of the ancients and in the Book of Adam. Between each earth and the next is a firmament which divides them from one another. Hence they all have separate names, among them being the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom. The creatures in them also are different, corresponding to those above, some with two faces, some with four, and some with one; and their aspects also differ. But, it may be said, are not all men descended from Adam, and did Adam then go down to each of these earths and beget sons there? The truth is, however, that man is found only in this highest earth which is called Tebel (inhabited world), and which is attached to the upper firmament and to the supreme Name. Hence man is superior to all other creatures. For, just as above there is a highest firmament which is the throne of the Holy One, blessed be He, so below on this Tebel is the king of all, to wit, man. As for the lower creatures, they are produced from the moisture of the earth under the influence of the heavens, which brings forth creatures of various kinds, some with skins and some with shells—red, black, or white, and so forth, none of them enduring for more than ten years or so. In the Book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder it is explained further that all the inhabited world is circular like a ball, so that some are above and some below, and the strange appearances of certain races are due to the nature of the air, but they live as long as other men. Further, there is a part of the world where it is light when in another part it is dark, so that some have night while others have day. Also there is a place where it is always day and where there is no night save for a very short time. All this account which is found in the books of the ancients and in the Book of Adam is confirmed by Scripture, which says: "I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, wonderful are thy works" (Ps. CXXXIX, 15), and again, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works" (Ps. CIV, 24). This mystery[1] has been entrusted to the masters of wisdom,[2]

[1] That there are seven earths enveloping one another. [2] The Cabbalists.

but is not known to those who mark out boundaries.[1] Similarly the sea is full of different creatures, but in all worlds there is no ruler save man and God above him.'

R. Nehorai the Elder once went on a sea voyage. The ship was wrecked in a storm and all in it were drowned. He, however, by some miracle, went down to the bottom of the sea and found there an inhabited land where he saw strange human beings of diminutive size; they were reciting prayers, but he could not tell what they said. By another miracle he then came up again. He said: "Blessed are the righteous who study the Torah and know the most profound mysteries. Woe to those who dispute with them and do not accept their word." From that day, whenever he came into the house of study and heard the Torah being expounded, he would weep. When they asked him why he wept, he would say, "Because I was sceptical about the words of the Rabbis, and now I fear me for the judgement of the other world."

R. Judah, commenting on the verse, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters", said: "Did not that firmament divide the upper from the lower waters there would be conflict between them. But [10b] that firmament keeps the peace between them, and the world is established only on peace. God is also called "peace"; He is peace, His name is peace, and all is bound together in peace.' R. Abba said: 'I see that this supreme Holy Name is altogether peace and altogether one, and paths diverge from it in all directions.'[2] [11b]

IF HIS OBLATION BE A SACRIFICE OF PEACE OFFERINGS. R. Abba here quoted the verse: "Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out" (S.S. IV, 15). 'The north wind', he said, 'refers to the burnt offerings which were killed on the north side (*ẓafon*) of the altar, because these atone for the thoughts which are in the recesses (*maẓpune*) of a man's

[1] The geographers. [2] The passage which follows in the text deals with the symbolism of the forms of the letters of the Divine Name, and also assigns the various names of the Deity to the various grades, as may be found in the table in the Appendix of Vol. I of this translation.

heart. The south wind refers to the peace offerings, which were killed on the south side of the altar, because they make peace between higher and lower, and between the various quarters of the world. Therefore the bringer also eats of them and has a share in them. Of all the offerings, none are so well beloved to God as the peace offerings, because they bring harmony to upper and lower. Superior to all, however, is the incense, because it is brought not for sin or trespass, but for joy, as it is written, "Oil and incense rejoice the heart" (Prov. XXVII, 9), according to our explanation. For this reason the incense was brought at the same time that the lamp was lit (Ex. XXX, 7). The peace offerings spread peace everywhere and allay strife and wrangling, but the incense fastens the bond of faith.'[1] [12b]

When R. Hizkiah was studying with R. Isaac, they once rose at midnight to study the Torah. R. Isaac discoursed on the verse: "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord" (Ps. CXXXIV, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'is a tribute to all true believers. And who are the true believers? Those who study the Torah and know how to unify the Holy Name in the fitting manner. [13a] When a man rises at midnight to study the Torah and the North Wind awakes, then a certain Hind[2] arises and praises the Holy One, blessed be He. And with Her arise thousands and myriads [of angels] who all commence to praise the holy King. But they all fall into silence in order to listen to those who study the Torah, and they proclaim: "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord", as much as to say, "*You* bless the Lord, *you* praise the holy King, *you* crown the King." And that Hind adorns herself with that man and stands before the King and says: "See the son with whom I am come before thee, with whom I approach thee." Their blessing is a real blessing, as it says, "Lift up your hands in (to) holiness" (*Ibid.*) What is

[1] The passage which follows in the text resumes the discussion of the relation of the names of the Deity to the various grades, and suggests an alternative arrangement. This again is followed by a psasage comparing the Ten Commandments to the ten "Words" of the Creation by a highly forced interpretation. [2] The Shekinah.

"holiness"? The supernal Place from which issues the source of the "deep stream". When a man has come so far, they proclaim over him, "The Lord bless thee from Zion" (*Ibid.*); from the place in which the Community of Israel is blessed, from there He will furnish thee with blessings. Also, "thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem" (Ps. CXXVIII, 5), to wit, the blessings that reach it from the King through that holy grade of the Righteous One.'

IF A SOUL SIN, ETC. R. Jose said: 'How greatly should men take heed not to sin before their Master, for every day a herald goes forth proclaiming, Turn your hearts, ye peoples, to the holy King, be on your guard against sin, arouse the holy soul which He has given you from the celestial holy place. For so we have learnt, that when the Holy One, blessed be He, draws forth a soul to send it down to earth, He impresses upon it many warnings and threats to keep His commandments, and He also takes it through a thousand-and-eight worlds to see the glory of those who have devoted themselves to the Torah, and who now stand before the King in a robe of splendour in the form which they possessed in this world, beholding the glory of the King and crowned with many diadems. When its time comes to descend to earth, it makes its abode in the terrestrial Paradise for thirty days to see the glory of the Master of the righteous, and then ascends to their abode above and afterwards comes down to earth. [13b] Before it enters into the body of a man, the holy King crowns it with seven crowns. If it sins in this world and walks in darkness, the Torah is grieved for it and says, All this honour and all this perfection has the holy King delivered to the soul, and she has sinned before Him! And what if she does sin? We learn the answer', continued R. Jose, 'from the verse which says, "Until the day be cool and the shadows flee away" (S.S. II, 17). "Until the day be cool": this is a warning to the soul to repent and purify itself before the day of this world shall cool off and be followed by that awful day on which God shall call her to account when she departs from this world. "And the shadows flee away": this refers to the secret known to the Companions, that when a man's

time comes to leave this world, his shadow deserts him. R. Eleazar says that man has two shadows, one larger and one smaller, and when they are together, then he is truly himself. Therefore a man should review his actions and rectify them before his Master and confess his sins, because God is called merciful and gracious, and He receives those who return to Him. Hence he should repent before the shadows flee away, for if he only does so when he is already under arrest, this is indeed repentance, but not so acceptable. For when the day arrives for the soul to depart from the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, looks sadly at her and says: "If a soul sin although it hath heard the voice of adjuration"—for did I not adjure her by My Name not to be false to Me, and testify against her when she went down to earth? "And he is a witness" (*Ibid.*): truly so, for many times I testified against him to keep my commandments. Therefore since the man is a witness, when he returns to the King and either "sees" or "knows"—sees, that is, his sins and ponders on them, or knows for certain that he has committed some transgression—then, "if he do not utter it", that is, if he do not confess his sins before his Master, when he leaves this world "he shall bear his iniquity". And if that is so, how shall the doors be opened to him and how shall he stand before his Master? Therefore it is written, "When a soul sinneth, etc." '

R. Abba cited the verse: "All this is come upon us, yet we have not forgotten thee, neither have our steps declined from thy way" (Ps. XLIV, 19). 'The word "this" ', he said, 'where we should have expected "these things", alludes to the celestial judgements; all these, says the Psalmist, have come upon us, and yet we have not forgotten the words of the Torah. From this we learn that whoever forgets the words of the Torah and is not willing to study is like one who forgets God, for all the Torah is the name of the Holy One, blessed be He. And whoever deals falsely with the sign of the holy covenant which is imprinted on him is like one who deals falsely with the name of the King, for the very name of the King is stamped on him. Further, the Torah is bound up with this, and whoever keeps this covenant is like one who keeps the whole Torah, and whoever is false to it is like one who is false to the whole Torah. So, until Abraham was circumcised it was not written of him that he kept the whole Torah, but after he was circumcised it says of him: "Because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws" (Gen. XXVI, 5). So, too, with Isaac [14a]; and Joseph, too, because he guarded this covenant, was rewarded with the ox, which is the first of offerings, as it says: "The firstling of his ox, majesty is his" (Deut. XXXIII, 17).' Said R. Judah to him: 'Why was he blessed with that which is of the left and not of the right, as it is written, "The face of an ox was on the left" (Ezek. I, 10)?' He replied: 'That he might avert the punishment of the sins of Jeroboam.' Said R. Judah: 'I have learnt a secret relating to this verse, that the word "ox" here alludes to a certain supernal grade, the partner of the one elsewhere called "cow", and that Joseph, because he guarded the covenant, became attached to these two grades.' Said R. Abba: 'This shows that whoever guards this sign attaches to himself these two grades to protect him and to crown him with heavenly glory.' R. Simeon said: 'A man who begets a son becomes linked with the Shekinah, which is the gateway to all the heavenly doors, the door which is linked with the Holy Name. Also, the blood which flows from the child is preserved before the Almighty, and when punishment impends over the world, God looks at that blood and delivers the world. We have learnt that through that blood the world is based on lovingkindness (*hesed*), and all worlds are established.' So R. Simeon expounded the words: "If not for my covenant day and night, etc." (Jer. XXXIII, 25), saying: 'There are two Crowns linked together, they being the gateway to all other Crowns; one is Justice and the other is Mercy, one male and one female, one white and one red. This covenant takes hold of both of them, lovingkindness and judgement, day and night. Hence it is called "day and night", because it takes hold on both. Thus he who is able to keep this covenant without fail and offends not against it all his days takes hold of day and night and is rewarded in two worlds, in this world and the world to come.

Therefore Abraham was called "perfect" (Gen. XVII, 1), but not before he had attained both, day and night, and this was only after he was circumcised.'

Said R. Eleazar to him: 'We have learnt that when a proselyte is circumcised and enters under the wings of the Shekinah, he is called *ger ẓedek* (a proselyte of righteousness), but no more, which means that he is privileged to enter into [14*b*] the crown of righteousness, and you say that he attains to "day and night"?' He replied: 'Eleazar, my son, you cannot compare one who comes from the holy root and the stock of truth to one who comes from an evil stock and from an abhorred root. Of Israel it is written, "I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed" (Jer. II, 21), whereas of the idolatrous nations it is written, "whose flesh is as the flesh of asses and whose issue is like the issue of horses" (Ezek. XXIII, 20). Therefore Israel, who are holy, the seed of truth, the stock which has been established at Mount Sinai, where all their filth was removed from them, all enter into the covenant of day and night to be wholly perfected, but for the other nations it is hard to remove their pollution, even after three generations. Hence the expression, "proselyte of *ẓedek*[1] (righteousness)". 'And so', said Rab Hamnuna the Elder, 'Gentiles before they are circumcised abide in the lower crowns, which are not holy, and an impure spirit rests on them. When they are converted and circumcised, they abide in a holy crown which is above the lower crowns, and a holy spirit rests upon them. But the Israelites who are holy sons of holy parents who have been established at Mount Sinai and have entered into the perfect faith, so soon as they are circumcised attain to all.'

R. Jose said: 'It is written, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me" (Isa. LIV, 9). Why have we here the expression "waters of Noah" and not "waters of the flood"? The reason is that when mankind are sinful and there is a righteous man in the world, God speaks with him in order that he may pray for mankind and obtain forgiveness for them. God first promises to save him alone and destroy the rest. Now the proper thing for a righteous man to do at such a time is to

[1] i.e. they are attached only to this grade.

forget himself and espouse the cause of the whole world in order to appease God's wrath against them, as Moses did when Israel sinned. When God, however, said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come [15*a*] before me", Noah replied, "And what wilt thou do to me?", to which God replied, "I will establish my covenant with thee, make thee an ark of gopher wood". So Noah did not pray for the world, and the waters came down and destroyed mankind, and therefore they are called "the waters of Noah".'

R. Jose continued: 'What is the meaning of "this (*zoth*) is to me", in the verse quoted? Said the Holy One, blessed be He, The waters of Noah have caused me to reveal *zoth* in the world, as it is written, "*zoth* (this) is the sign of my covenant with them, my bow have I set in the heaven" (Gen. IX, 12, 13), as much as to say, there is none who heeds the glory of My Name which is alluded to by the word *zoth*. Hence it is one of the signs of a saintly and virtuous man that the rainbow does not appear in his days and the world does not require this sign while he is alive. Such a one is he who prays for the world and shields it, like Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai, in whose days the world never required the sign of the rainbow, for he was himself a sign. For if ever punishment was decreed against the world he could annul it. One day he was sitting at the gate of Lydda when he lifted up his eyes and saw the light of the sun darkened three times, and black and yellow spots appearing in the sun. He said to his son, R. Eleazar: 'Follow me, my son, and let us see what happens, for of a surety some punishment is decreed above, and God desires to let me know. For such a decree is kept in suspense thirty days, and God does not carry it out before making it known to the righteous, as it is written, "For the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets" (Amos III, 7).' They came into a vineyard, where they saw a serpent advancing like a coil of fire along the ground. R. Simeon shook his garments and brought his hand down on the head of the serpent, which then came to a halt, though its tongue was still moving. He said to it: "Serpent, serpent, go and tell that supernal Serpent that R. Simeon is still alive." It then put its head into a hole in the ground. He said: "I

ordain that just as this serpent has returned to its hole in the ground, so the supernal one shall return to the hollow of the great abyss." R. Simeon then began to pray. As they were praying they heard a voice say: "Ye ministers of evil, return to your place; ye band of ruffians, abide not in the world, for R. Simeon ben Yochai annuls your power. Happy art thou, R. Simeon, that thy Master is solicitous for thy honour at all times, above that of all other men." By this time he saw that the sun was shining again and the blackness had passed. He said: "Surely the world is safe again." He then went into his house and expounded the verse: "For the Lord is righteous, he loveth righteousness, the upright shall behold his face" (Ps. XI, 8). 'God', he said, 'loves to do righteous acts when the upright behold his face, that is, pray to him for their needs. According to a more esoteric explanation, the verse means that the 'days of antiquity' (*yeme kedem*) of the Ancient Unrevealed Holy One and the 'days of old' (*yeme olam*) of the Small of Countenance, which are called 'his face', see with direct glance the most precious of sights. For so we have learnt, that when the Holy One, blessed be He, looks upon the works of men and sees that they are good, then the Ancient Holy One is revealed in the Small of Countenance, and all the countenance of the latter beholds the hidden countenance and is wholly blessed, since they look at one another directly without turning to the right or left, [15*b*] and they water one another until all worlds are blessed and all become one, so that 'the Lord is one and his name is one'. But when sin is rife in the world, the Ancient Holy One is hidden and they do not look at one another face to face, and punishment is let loose on the world and the thrones are cast down and the Ancient of Days is hidden and does not appear, so that sinners turn mercy into judgement.

'We have learnt as follows. From the side of the Mother issue emissaries of punishment who are armed with the clubs of *Geburah* (Severity), and prevail over Mercy, and then the worlds are defective and there is conflict between them. But when men amend their ways below, punishment is mitigated and removed, and mercy is awakened and prevails over the evil which arose from stern judgement, and then

there is joy and consolation, as it is written, "And the Lord was comforted of the evil" (Ex. XXXII, 14). When judgement is mitigated, all the Crowns return to their places and the keys are restored to the Mother, and this is called repentance (*teshubah*, lit. returning), and the world is forgiven, since the Mother is in perfect joy.'[1] [16*a*]

R. Abba was once sitting before R. Simeon, when R. Eleazar entered. R. Simeon thereupon quoted the verse: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, etc." (Ps. XCII, 12). 'The palm', he said, 'is the slowest of all trees to mature, taking seventy years. The reason why the righteous is compared here to the palm tree is one which the Companions are reluctant to reveal, although it is indicated by the Scripture. It has to do with the exile of Babylon, when the Shekinah did not return to its home till seventy years had passed. The "righteous" here is the Holy One, blessed be He, as in the verse, "For the Lord is righteous, he loveth righteousness" (Ps. XI, 8). He is also compared to a cedar, as in the verse, "Excellent as the cedars" (S.S. 15). "He shall grow in Lebanon"; this is the supernal Eden, of which it is written, "No eye hath seen, O God, save thine" (Isa. LXIV, 4). This Cedar shall grow in that exalted place; and this shall be in the last exile, when God shall be like that cedar which is long in coming up, but once it comes up grows in a day, and at the beginning of the next day already provides a shade against the sun. "They shall be planted in the house of the Lord", at the time of the Messiah; "and flourish in the courts of our God, at the resurrection of the dead; "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age", on the day when the world will be waste, "and they shall be full of sap and green" afterwards; [16*b*] and why all this? "To show that the Lord is upright, he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him." '

[1] The passage which follows is written in so allusive a style that it would be hardly possible to convey its meaning by a translation. The point of it is that sin (especially the sin of unchastity)"uncovers the nakedness of the Mother (*Binah*)", and repentance is the covering-up again. The word *teshubah* (returning) is also explained to mean, "causing the light from the Ancient Holy One to return to the Small of Countenance".

R. Simeon further discoursed on the verse: "A froward man scattereth abroad strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. XVI, 28). "'The froward man scattereth abroad strife", as we have said, that sinners cause a blemish above; "and a whisperer separateth his friend", that is, he separateth the Matrona from the Holy One, blessed be He, so that He is not called One, for He is not called One save when they are in union. Woe to the wicked who cause separation above! And happy are the righteous who stablish the upper realm, and happy are the penitent who restore all things to their places. Hence we have learnt that to the place reserved for penitents even the wholly righteous cannot attain. For the former are established in an exceeding high place, the place from which the Garden is watered, whereas the latter are established only in the place called "righteous". The former bring the water from the supernal place of the deep river to that place which is called "righteous", and the latter transmit it from that place where they abide to this world. Hence the former are higher and the latter lower. Happy is the lot of the penitent, and happy is the lot of the wholly righteous, since through them the world is able to exist.' [17a]

IF THE ANOINTED PRIEST SHALL SIN SO AS TO BRING GUILT ON THE PEOPLE. R. Abba cited here the verse: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth . . . if thou know not, O fairest among women, go thy way forth, etc.' (S.S. I, 7, 8). 'The Companions', he said, 'have explained these verses in reference to Moses at the time when he departed from the world, as it says, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation . . . who shall go out before them, etc." (Num. XXVII, 16). We may also, however, suppose them to be addressed by the Community of Israel to the Holy King. In the Book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder it is written that so long as the Community of Israel is in the Holy One, blessed be He, the latter, so to speak, is complete and pleased with himself from sucking the milk of the supernal Mother, and from that draught He waters all the others and gives them suck. We have learnt also that R.

Simeon said that as long as the Community of Israel is in the Holy One, blessed be He, the latter is complete and joyful, and blessings abide in Him and issue from Him to all the others, but when the Community of Israel is not in the Holy One, blessed be He, then, as it were, blessings are withheld from Him and from all the others. The secret of the matter is that wherever male and female are not found together, blessings do not rest. Hence the Holy One, blessed be He, laments and weeps, as it says, "The Lord shall mightily roar over his fold" (Jer. XXV, 30). And when [17b] the Community of Israel went into exile, she said to Him, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, how shalt thou feed thyself from the deep river that ever flows, how shalt thou feed thyself from the light of the supernal Eden, how shalt thou feed all the others that depend on thee, just as I too was fed from thee every day and water all those below, and Israel too were fed by me? And now how shall I be as one that is veiled, as one that fainteth without blessings for lack of the blessings that I require and have not? How shall I be able to lead without feeding the flocks of thy companions, to wit, Israel, the children of the patriarchs, who are a holy chariot above? To which the Holy One, blessed be He, answers: Leave this to me, for the secret thereof is with me. But if thou knowest not, here is a counsel for thee. Go thy way by the footsteps of the flock, to wit, the righteous who are trodden underfoot, and for whose sake I will give thee strength to rise, and feed thou thy kids, to wit, the school children for whose sake the world is preserved, and who give strength to the Community of Israel in exile, beside the shepherds' tents, the schools in which the Torah is ever to be found. Or the last words may be explained thus. When there are in the world righteous men and children learning the Torah, then the Community of Israel can exist with them in exile, but if not, God forbid, then neither She nor they can endure. And if there are any righteous, then they suffer first [for the sins of the age], and if not, then those kids for whose sake the world is preserved suffer first, and God takes them from the world although there is no sin in them. And not only this, but He also banishes from Himself the Community of

Israel and She goes into exile. Hence it is written, "If the anointed High Priest shall sin so as to bring guilt on the people", or rather, "on account of the guilt of the people", the word *yeḥeta* (sin), meaning here "withhold his kindness and exercise judgement." '

R. Isaac cited the verse: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants" (Ex. XXXII, 13). 'Why', he asked, 'is it not written, "*and* Isaac"? The reason is, as we have learnt, that everywhere the "left" is embraced in the "right", and the right has been strengthened so that it can embrace the left, and therefore the word Isaac is not separated from Abraham. But the text goes on, "*and* Israel", because Jacob clasped both of them and was perfect in all. The verse proceeds: "To whom thou swarest by thy own self." God swore to the patriarchs by the Fathers[1] above, by those who abide "in thee". "Which I said"; that is, "I willed", as in the verse: "The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness" (1 Kings VIII, 12). "And they shall inherit it for ever" (lit. for a world): this is the supernal world to which this earth is attached and from which it is nourished, and if this earth is put away, why is it? Because of the iniquity of the people.'

IF THE ANOINTED PRIEST SIN. R. Isaac said: 'This is the priest on earth who has been appointed for divine service. If a sin is found in him, then verily it brings guilt on the whole people, and woe to them who are relying upon him! [18a] Similarly, if sin is found in the reader of a congregation, woe to those who are relying upon him!' R. Judah said: 'All the more so the priest, at whose hand all Israel and upper and lower beings are waiting to be blessed. For, as we have learnt, when the priest began to recite the formulas and to bring the offering, all were blessed and joyful. The Right began to waken, the Left was merged in the Right; all were linked together and united, so that through the priest heaven and earth were blessed. Hence he had to bring an offering for himself, that his sin might be atoned for.' Said R. Jose: 'We have learnt that through the priest a man's sin is

[1] The highest grades.

atoned for when he brings the offering. But if the priest himself sins, who can bring an offering and atone for him, seeing that he is become corrupt and is not fit to be a source of blessing?' Said R. Judah: 'But is it not written, "And he shall make atonement *for himself* and for his house" (Lev. XVI, 6)?' Said R. Ḥiya: 'We know that the high priest was attached to a certain Place, and the deputy high priest and the ordinary priest to another. Therefore another priest had to bring his offering first that he might ascend to the Place to which he was by right attached, and there atone for his sin. If this is not enough, then the high priest brings his own offering, and then the angels all assemble to atone for his sin and the Holy King assents.'

Once as R. Eleazar and R. Abba were sitting together, the former said: 'I observe that my father will not listen to any man reading the prayers on New Year and the Day of Atonement unless he has watched him three days previously to purify him; for R. Simeon used to say, "Through the prayer of the man whom I have purified the world receives atonement." He was still more particular not to accept the *shofar*[1] blowing of any man who was not well acquainted with the rules of the *shofar* and their inner significance.

'On this day (of New Year) Isaac is crowned, and becomes the head of the patriarchs.' Said R. Abba: 'We read the portion of Isaac (Gen. XXI, XXII) on this day, because on this day he was bound below and was also united to the One above. R. Eleazar said: 'On this day Isaac crowned Abraham with glory, as it says, "And the Lord exalted (*nissah*, lit. proved) Abraham" (Gen. XXII, 1), because the Right Hand was completed and perfected.' R. Abba said: 'Had not the judgement of Isaac been passed through the place where Jacob abides and annulled there, it would have gone ill with the world. But when it entered into the place of Jacob, and Jacob laid hold [18b] on it, then the fire sank and the heat was cooled. It is as if a man in a great passion seizes his weapons and goes out to kill someone, but a certain wise man meets him at the door and detains him, and while they are arguing with one another his anger cools down, and instead of going out to

[1] The ram's horn blown on New Year.

kill, he only goes out to reprove. Who was it on whom the man vented his passion? Surely the man who stood at the door! So the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: "My sons, fear not, for I stand at the door; only brace yourselves up on this day and give Me strength. And through what? Through the *shofar*. For if the sound of the *shofar* is properly produced and listened to with devotion, then it mounts aloft and the patriarchs crown themselves with it and stand in the tent of Jacob. Hence strict attention should be paid to the sound of the *shofar*. Every sound of the *shofar* ascends to a different firmament, all the denizens of which give place to the sound, saying, "And the Lord uttereth his voice before his army" (Joel II, 11). And that voice remains in the firmament until another voice comes and joins it, and then they both ascend together to another firmament. And when all the voices from below are collected and ascend to the highest firmament where the Holy King is, they stand before the Holy King and then the thrones are set and another throne, that of Jacob, is firmly established. In the Book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder we find: Prayer and the sound of the *shofar* which are produced by a virtuous man with his heart and soul mount above, and the accusers above are thrust away before it and cannot face it. Happy are the righteous who know how to be truly devout before their Master and to establish the world on this day with the sound of the *shofar;* hence it is written, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound (of the *shofar*)" (Ps. LXXXIX, 15). On this day the congregation must look out for a man without blame who knows the ways of the King and how to honour Him, that he may pray for them and transmit the sound of the *shofar* to all worlds with concentration of thought, with wisdom, and with devotion, that through him chastisement may be removed from the world. Alas for those whose minister is not fitting, for through him their sins will be called to mind. But if he is truly virtuous, then the people are justified through him, and punishment is removed from them through him.' Said R. Eleazar: 'For this reason the priest and Levite were examined as to their character, and if they were not found satisfactory they were not allowed

to minister. And so, too, with the members of the Sanhedrin before they were allowed to judge.'

AND IF THE WHOLE CONGREGATION SHALL ERR, ETC. R. Simeon cited in this connection the verse: "Rise up, ye women that are at ease, and hear my voice, etc." (Isa. XXXII, 9). He said: 'A man should be ever solicitous for the honour of his Master in order that his son may be without flaw. For when God created man, He created [19a] him without flaw, as it is written, "God made man upright" (*yashar*, lit. straight) (Eccles. VII, 20). The word "man" (*adam*) means male and female, the female being included in the male, and hence it says "upright". Now in the depth of the great abyss there is a certain hot fiery female spirit named Lilith, who at first cohabited with man. For when man was created and his body completed, a thousand spirits from the left side assembled round that body, each endeavouring to enter, until at last a cloud descended and drove them away and God said, "Let the earth bring forth a living soul" (Gen. I, 24), and it then brought forth a spirit to breathe into man, who thus became complete with two sides, as it says, "And he breathed in his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul" (Gen. II, 7). When man arose, his female was affixed to his side, and the holy spirit in him spread to each side, thus perfecting itself. Afterwards God sawed the man in two and fashioned his female and brought her to him like a bride to the canopy. When Lilith saw this she fled, and she is still in the cities of the sea coast trying to snare mankind. And when the Almighty will destroy the wicked Rome, He will settle Lilith among the ruins, since she is the ruin of the world, as it is written: "For there Lilith shall settle and find her a place of rest" (Isa. XXXIV, 14). In ancient books it says that she fled from man before this, but we have learnt differently, that she associated with man until this soul (*neshamah*) was placed in him, and then she fled to the seaside, where she tries to harm mankind.

'The remedy is this. When a man unites with his wife, he should sanctify his heart to his Master and say: "She that is wrapped in a robe is here. Thou shalt not enter nor take

out; it is neither of thee nor of thy lot. Return, return, the sea is heaving, its waves await thee. I cleave to the holy portion, I am wrapped in the holiness of the King." He should then cover his head and the head of his wife for a short time. In the book which Ashmedai gave to King Solomon, it says that he should then sprinkle clean water round the bed. If a woman is suckling a child she should not join her husband while the child is awake, nor give it suck afterwards until time enough has elapsed for walking two miles, or one mile if the child cries for milk. If all this is done, Lilith will never be able to harm them. Happy are the righteous whom God has taught the secrets of the Torah, of heaven and earth, and all for the sake of the Torah, for whoever studies the Torah is crowned with the crowns of the holy Name, and knows secret ways and the mysteries of heaven and earth, and never comes to harm.

'Now [19*b*] on that day they were commanded concerning a certain tree and disobeyed the command. And because the woman sinned first it was decreed that the husband should rule over her. And from that time, whenever men sin before God those women from the side of severe judgement are charged to rule over them—those who are called "the flame of the revolving sword" (Gen. III, 24), which takes the shape sometimes of males and sometimes of females, as elsewhere stated. Alas for the world when those women have sway! When the prophet saw Israel perverting their ways and sinning before their Master, he exclaimed: "Ye women that are at ease, how can ye rest, how can ye sit idle in the world? Rise!" as has been explained elsewhere.

'. . .[1] It was only said in the sense in which it was applied to Deborah. There is a dictum: Woe to the man at whose table the wife says grace. So when we read that "Deborah judged Israel at that time", we might exclaim, "Woe to the generation which could only find a female to be its judge!" See now. There were two women in the world who composed praises to God such as the men never equalled, namely, Hannah and Deborah. Hannah opened the gate of faith to the world in the words, "He raiseth up the poor from the dust, etc." (1 Sam. II, 8). "To make them sit with princes":

[1] There is a lacuna here in the text.

to wit, in the place where the princes, that is the patriarchs, sit above. According to another explanation, however, this refers to Samuel, who was placed on a par with Moses and Aaron. "And make them inherit a throne of glory": this refers to Samuel, who placed two kings on the throne. Or it may refer to God, who causes His servants to inherit His throne. "They that strive with the Lord shall be broken in pieces": that is to say, when judgement prevails over mercy, if then the Holy One, blessed be He, is blessed from the Source of the River, then mercy prevails and judgement is checked. "Against them he shall thunder in heaven": that is, when the dew from the Ancient Holy One shall rest upon Him and fills His head in the place called "heaven", then He breaks the power of mighty judgements. "And he shall give strength to his king": this is the Holy One, blessed be He; "and exalt the horn of his anointed": this is the Community of Israel. Deborah likewise praised the Holy King, as it is written: "Lord, when thou wentest forth out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom" (Judges V, 1)—speaking in the mystery of wisdom until she began to praise herself, saying, "Until that I Deborah arose, that I arose, a mother in Israel." Then the spirit of prophecy left her, so that she had to say to herself, "Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song" (*Ibid.* 12). All this happened when the men were sinful and not worthy that the spirit of prophecy should rest upon them.' [20*a*]

AND IF THE WHOLE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL SHALL ERR, ETC. This has been explained to mean, "err in interpreting the law". The "congregation" (*'adath*) refers to those who were in Jerusalem, from whence instruction went forth to all the people, so that if those who were there erred the whole people erred. AND THE THING BE HID FROM THE EYES OF THE ASSEMBLY: the "eyes" of the assembly are the Sanhedrin who were appointed over Israel.

R. Ḥiya and R. Jose were once walking together when the latter said: 'Let us expound words of the Torah, words of the Ancient of Days.' R. Ḥiya thereupon began with the verse: "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, etc." (Ps. XXXII, 5).

He said: 'From this we learn that a man who conceals his sins and does not confess them before the Holy King and beg for mercy is not allowed to enter the door of repentance. But if he states them openly before God, then God has pity on him and mercy prevails over judgement, all the more so if he weeps, for tears open all doors. Thus the confession of sin brings honour to the King by making mercy prevail over judgement. There seems to be a certain redundancy of expression in this verse, as it would have been sufficient to say, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; and here, too, we should have expected "to thee" instead of "to the Lord". But, indeed, these words, like all David's words, were uttered in the holy spirit. He was addressing the Kingdom of Heaven [*Malkuth*], for she is the intermediary between earth and heaven, and whoso has a petition of the King must make it known to her first. Hence David said: "I will acknowledge my sin to thee, the Kingdom of Heaven, and mine iniquity have I not hid from the Righteous One of the universe, and I said, I will confess my sin to the Lord, to wit, the Holy King to whom all peace belongs." Then it goes on: "And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin"; this was in the highest realm, the place where the Ancient Holy One abides. Thus this verse includes all; and in the same way, whoever prays to the King should unify the Holy Name in his thought, ranging from lower to upper, and from upper to lower, and linking all together, and then his prayer will be granted.' Said R. Jose: 'Who has the skill to pray like King David, who used to keep watch at the gate of the King?' Said R. Ḥiya to him: 'Assuredly it is so, and therefore the Torah has taught us the ways [20*b*] of the Holy King that we may know how to seek him, as it says, "After the Lord your God ye shall walk" (Deut. XIII, 4).'

R. Jose then discoursed on the verse: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and weeping, etc." (Jer. XXXI, 15). 'We have learnt', he said, 'that on the day when the Sanctuary on earth was laid waste and Israel went into captivity with millstones on their necks and their hands bound behind them, and the Community of Israel was banished from the house of her Husband to follow them, when She came down She said: "I will go in front and weep for my home and my children and my Husband." When she came down and saw her home devastated and the blood of saints spilled in its midst and the holy shrine and temple burnt, She lifted up her voice, and higher and lower angels fell a-quaking and the voice ascended to the place where the King abode, and the King was minded to turn the world into chaos again. Thereupon many armies and hosts went down to meet Her, but She would not accept consolation. Hence it is written, "A voice is heard in Ramah, Rachel weeping for her children because they are not"; or, as we should rather translate, "*He* is not" (*enennu*), referring to the Holy King who had gone aloft and was not in her midst.' R. Ḥiya asked: 'From what place did She begin to go into exile?' He replied: 'From the Sanctuary, where Her abode was. Afterwards She went all round the Land of Israel, and when She left it She came into the wilderness and remained there three days. She took Her armies and hosts and the denizens of the King's palace and exclaimed regarding herself: "How doth she sit solitary" (Lam. I, 1).' R. Ḥiya and R. Jose wept. Said R. Jose: 'Israel were not exiled from their land, nor was the Temple destroyed until they were all sinful before the King, the heads of the people being foremost in sin, as it says: "O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isa. III, 12): for, when the heads of the people sin, all the rest follow them.' R. Ḥiya learnt the same lesson from the verse, "And if the whole congregation of Israel shall err". 'Why do they err?' he said. 'Because "the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly", the "eyes" being the leaders whom all the rest follow.'

They then went on their way and came across a certain grassy sward, with a stream running past, so they sat down there. As they were sitting, a bird flew past them with a rustling noise. Said R. Ḥiya: 'Let us get up, for assuredly mountain-diggers[1] are here.' So they got up and went on. Turning their heads they saw robbers running after them. Providentially they saw in front of them a rock with a cave in it, so they went in and sat there the whole of that day and night.

[1] Al. "runners". The reference in either case is to robbers.

R. Ḥiya discoursed on the verse: "Therefore fear not, O Jacob my servant . . . for lo, I will save thee from afar" (Jer. XXX, 10). 'The word "afar" here', he said, 'is used in the same sense as in the words, "From afar the Lord appeared unto me" (*Ibid.* XXXI, 3), and refers to the deep source of the River, the place where it issues forth. "Jacob shall return": Jacob is here a name of the Holy One, blessed be He, who will yet return to join the Community of Israel. "And shall be quiet": this refers to *Yesod*. "And at ease": to make his abode there. "And none shall make him afraid": of Isaac (*Geburah*). [21*a*] And now the Holy One, blessed be He, has delivered us from afar and hidden us in this place in quiet and ease, and there is none to make us afraid; for when God does a miracle He does it completely.'

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: "And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me then I will go, etc." (Judges IV, 8). He said: 'Barak reasoned thus: Because the holy spirit rests upon her I shall be delivered through her merit and shall come to no harm. Now if Barak could feel safe in dependence on a female, how much more so we who have the Torah with us, which is the name of the Holy King!'

So they remained in the cave all that day. When night came, the moon shone into the cave, and two merchants passed by with asses laden with wine and food for themselves. They said to one another: 'Let us stop here, and give food and drink to the asses, and go into the cave.' Said the other: 'Before we go in, explain this verse.' He said: 'Which one?' 'I refer', he said, 'to the verse, "I will praise thee for ever because thou hast done" (Ps. LII, 10). Done what? It also says, "Because thou art good in the presence of thy saints" (*Ibid.*). Why only in their presence and not that of others?' He could not give him an answer. 'Alas', he said, 'that for the sake of my business I have neglected the Holy One, blessed be He.' R. Ḥiya and R. Jose, who heard them from the cave, rejoiced. 'Did not I tell you', said R. Ḥiya, 'that when God does a miracle He does not do it by halves?' So they went out, and R. Ḥiya immediately addressed them with the verse: "Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near" (Isa. LVII, 19). 'The near and the far', he said, 'are one and

the same, namely, the penitent who was first far from God and has been brought near. Also, when a man is far from the Torah he is far from God, but if he draws near to the Torah, God draws him near to Himself. Now, therefore, join us and come into the cave.' So the merchants joined them, having first tethered their asses and given them food. Then they all went out to the mouth of the cave, and one of the merchants said: 'Since you are scholars, explain to us this verse: "I will give thee thanks for ever because thou hast done [made] and I will hope, etc." ' R. Ḥiya answered: 'It means, because thou hast made the world; for because of this world which God has made and established, man must thank Him every day. As for the words, "for thou art good before thy saints", this is indeed so, since the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is good before the righteous but not before the wicked, who spurn it every day and do not study the Torah.' Said the other: 'This is all very good, but I have heard a word from behind the wall, as they say, which I am afraid to disclose.' Thereupon R. Ḥiya and R. Jose said to him: 'Speak out, for the Torah is not an inheritance for one place only.' So he said to them: 'One day when I went to Lydda, on entering the town I stood behind the wall of a house in which was R. Simeon, and I heard him expound this verse, "I will praise thee because thou hast done", thus. The words "I will give praise to thee" were addressed by King David to the Holy One, blessed be He, for that last world which He has made [*Malkuth*]; for David attached himself to that world and through it attained to kingship. "I will wait on thy name, for it is good": this is the Holy One, blessed be He, when unified with that world which is called "good". And when is it called good? When it is in the presence of thy saints, or rather, "lovingkindnesses",[1] for when these are filled from the goodness of the stream issuing from the Ancient Holy One, then *Yesod* is called "good", and then He [*Yesod*] establishes this latter world and all is blessed. Hence David waited for this grade to illumine the world to which he was attached.' R. Ḥiya and R. Jose came up to him and kissed him on his head. Said R. [21*b*] Ḥiya: 'Who shall

[1] Reading *ḥasadekha* for *ḥasidekha*.

cover thine eye in the dust, O R. Simeon, for thou art in thy place and thou shakest the highest mountains, and even the birds of the heaven rejoice at thy words. Alas for the world when thou shalt depart from it!'

The man resumed: 'At the same time I heard him expound the verse, "Now therefore, O God, hearken unto the prayer of thy servant and to his supplications . . . for my Lord's (*Adonai*) sake" (Dan. IX, 17). If this name were the highest, it would be in place here, as though one were to say, Do it for the sake of the king. But we know that this name signifies only the place of judgement, from which judgement issues to the world. Can a man say to a king, Do for the sake of thy servant or something less than thyself? The truth is, however, that this name prepares the house for the King and the sanctuary below, and when the sanctuary is established below, this name is established above; hence it is as though one said to the king, Build this house and this palace, that the Matrona may not have to abide without the palace.'

R. Ḥiya and R. Jose were beside themselves with gladness on that night. After they had eaten, the other merchant said: 'I will now tell you something on which I have been meditating this day, in connection with the verse, "A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah" (Ps. LXIII, 1). David said this psalm when he was fleeing from his father-in-law. Why did he say, "Elohim, thou art my God" (*Ibid.* 2)? Because he was always attached to *Geburah*. He went on, "I will seek thee early." How, we may ask, could David seek God early in a distant land, when he was exiled from the land where the Shekinah abides? This shows, that though he was driven from there, he did not cease to seek the Holy One, blessed be He. "My soul thirsteth for thee", because my soul and my body yearn for thee that I may appear before thee and I am not able, being in a dry and weary land where no water is; for so any land is called where the Shekinah does not abide.'

Said R. Ḥiya and R. Jose: 'Verily, our way is made straight before us.' So they went into the cave and slept. At midnight they heard the cries of wild animals in the wilderness, so they got up. Said R. Ḥiya: 'It is time to assist the Community of

Israel in praising the King. Let each of us say something which he has learnt of the Torah. So they all sat down and R. Ḥiya commenced with the text, "For the Chief Musician, set to Ayeleth Hashahar, a psalm of David" (Ps. XXII, 1). ' "Ayeleth Hashahar (lit. hind of the morning)" ', he said, 'is the Community of Israel, who is called "a loving hind and a pleasant doe" (Prov. V, 19). Is she then a hind of the morning only and not of all the day? What it means, however, is a hind from that place which is called " dawn", of which it says, "his going forth is as sure as the morning" (Hos. VI, 3). See now. When night falls, the doors of the upper world are closed, and those below fall to rest, and the distant ones (demons) awake and fly about and flit around the bodies of men, but if they see the likeness of the Holy King they are afraid, if men on their beds have thought about the Holy King. The souls of men ascend each according to its desert, as explained elsewhere. At midnight a herald gives order and the gates are opened. Then a wind arises from the north and strikes [22a] the harp of David, which then plays of itself and praises the King, and the Holy One, blessed be He, has joyous communion with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Happy is he who awakes at that time and studies the Torah: he is called a companion of the Holy One, blessed be He, and of the Community of Israel. When day comes, a herald again gives order and the doors on the south side are opened, the stars and constellations awake, and the King takes his seat to hear his praises. Then the Community of Israel takes up those words and carries them aloft, and all the Companions cling to her wings, and the words come and rest in the bosom of the King. Then the King gives command, and they are all written in a book, and the names of those admitted into the palace are recorded in a book and a thread of grace is woven round them, which is the crown of the King, causing all beings above and below to be afraid of them, so that they enter without let or hindrance into all the gates of the King. And even when the executioners of judgement arise to punish the world, they do not touch such a one, because he bears the stamp of the King, which proclaims him to come from the palace of the King. Happy the lot of the

righteous who study the Torah, especially at the time when the King longs for the words of the Torah ! The secret of the matter is that the Community of Israel does not come into the King's presence save with the Torah. So as long as Israel in their own land studied the Torah the Community of Israel abode with them, but when they neglected the Torah she could not stay with them an instant. So when she presented herself to the King with the Torah she was full of strength and confidence and the Holy King rejoiced to meet her, but when she came without the Torah, then, as it were, her strength was enfeebled. Woe to those who cause weakness above, and happy those who study the Torah, especially at the time when it is needful to associate with it the Community of Israel. Of such a one God says, "Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3).'

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: "The burden of Duma. One calleth unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night ?" (Isa. XXI, 11). 'This verse', he said, 'has already been expounded in many places, but it can also be interpreted as follows. To all the other exiles of Israel a term was set, and their duration was known beforehand, but the exile of Edom is "a burden of silence", for its term has not been disclosed. Says the Holy One, blessed be He: "One calls to Me from Seir": I have heard a voice from those who are oppressed and prostrate in the exile of Seir,[1] saying, Watchman, what of the night ?—asking Me what I have done with My Matrona. Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, assembles all His court and says: "See how My beloved children forget their own oppression and think only of the Matrona, saying to Me, Thou who art called Keeper, how dost Thou keep Thyself and Thy house ?" Then the Holy One, blessed be He, answers them: "I have not forgotten My guardianship, for I will yet receive Her and be with Her." "The morning has come", for at first He ascended aloft to that morning which is ever ready for Him. Now it is time to be joined to "the night". The night, too, is ready, but for your sakes it has been delayed. And if you ask why, the answer is, "Return", to wit, in repentance, and then "come to Me" and we shall

[1] Edom = Rome.

all place ourselves in a row and return to our place, as it is written, "And the Lord thy God will return with thy captivity [22b] and will return and gather thee from all the peoples." The word "return" occurs here twice—once referring to the Holy One, blessed be He, and once to the Community of Israel.'

The merchant then discoursed on the verse; "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7). 'When God', he said, 'comes to have joyous communion with the righteous in the Garden of Eden, everything in the lower (al. upper) world and all upper and lower angels arise to meet Him, and all the trees in the Garden break forth into song before Him, and even the birds of the earth utter praise before Him. Then a flame goes forth and strikes the wings of the cock, and it bursts into praise of the Holy King and calls to men to engage themselves in the study of the Law and in the praise of their Master and His service—happy the lot of those who then rise from their beds to study the Torah ! When the morning comes, the gates of the south are opened and healing goes forth to the world, and the east wind awakens and mercy prevails, and all the stars which are under the rule of that "morning" break out into song and praise the most high King, as it says, "when the morning stars sang together".'

The other merchant then discoursed on the verse: "As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away" (Gen. XLIV, 3). He said: 'We have learnt that when morning comes and judgement passes away and lovingkindness seeks to awake, then all who come from that side hasten to their place to prepare blessings for the world; and this is the meaning of the words, "the morning is light", "light" being synonymous with "good". Note the following series of grades. "Night" is one grade, as we know. Then "morning light" is another grade, which we also know, a higher grade which always accompanies the other. The sun is a third grade known to us which establishes all and gives light to all. Thus the "morning light" receives light from the sun, and in turn gives light to the night, so that they are all linked with one another. When this "morning light" awakes, all men

are gladdened and go about their business. And now that the day has dawned, it is time for us to go on our way.' So R. Ḥiya and R. Jose blessed them and kissed them on their heads and sped them on their way. Said R. Ḥiya to R. Jose: 'Blessed be God who has guided our steps aright! Verily, God sent these men to us. Blessed are they who study the Torah and do not neglect it for an instant!'

R. Ḥiya and R. Jose then left the cave and continued their journey. Said R. Jose: 'Verily, my heart goes out to those merchants.' R. Ḥiya said to him: 'I am not surprised at this incident, for in the days of R. Simeon even the birds utter wisdom, for his words are known above and below.' R. Ḥiya then quoted the verse: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers" (Deut. XXXI, 16). 'Mark this,' he said. 'As long as Moses was alive, he used to check Israel from sinning against God. And because Moses was among them, there shall not be a generation like that one till the Messiah comes, when they shall see the glory of God like him. As we have learnt, a handmaid saw at the Red Sea what even Ezekiel the prophet did not see. And if a handmaid saw that, how much more so their wives, their sons, the men themselves, the Sanhedrin, the princes, and especially Moses himself! And now when those merchants of the desert can pour forth such wisdom, how much more so the wise of the generation, how much more those who stand before R. Simeon and learn from him, [23a] and how very much more R. Simeon himself, who is above all! Alas for the world when R. Simeon shall depart, and the fountains of wisdom shall be closed, and men shall seek wisdom and there will be none to impart it, and the Torah will be interpreted erroneously because there will be none who is acquainted with wisdom! Of that time it is written: "And if the whole congregation of Israel shall err." Why? Because "the thing is hidden from the eyes, to wit, the leaders, of the assembly".' Said R. Judah: 'God will one day reveal the hidden mysteries of the Torah, namely, at the time of the Messiah, because "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord like as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. XI, 9), and as it is written, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Jer. XXXI, 34).'

WHEN A RULER SINNETH, ETC. R. Isaac pointed out that the corresponding clauses referring to the high priest and the congregation begin with the word "if"—"if the anointed priest shall sin, etc." (Lev. IV, 3). "if the whole congregation of Israel shall err, etc." (*Ibid.* 13). 'The reason is', he said, 'that it is exceptional for the High Priest to sin, since he feels his responsibility to his Master and to Israel and to each individual. Similarly, it is very exceptional for the whole congregation to commit one and the same sin, for if some commit it, others will not. But a prince's heart is uplifted because of his power, and therefore he is almost bound to sin; hence it says here, "when", and not "if".' R. Judah illustrated from the verse: "And the princes brought the onyx stones and the stones to be set for the ephod and the breastplate" (Ex. XXXV, 27). 'Why', he asked, 'should it have been left for the princes to bring these things, seeing that the order had gone forth that "everyone willing of heart should bring the Lord's offering" (*Ibid.* 4), including "onyx stones and stones to be set for the ephod and the breastplate" (*Ibid.* 9)? The reason is that God said: Although the free-will offering is requested from all, yet leave these things to the princes. Why? Because they are borne on the breast of the High Priest. Let the princes whose heart is uplifted bring these stones which are worn on the heart of the High Priest, so that he may make atonement for their pride of heart. AND HE SHALL DO UNWITTINGLY ONE OF THE THINGS WHICH THE LORD HIS GOD HATH COMMANDED NOT TO BE DONE: that is, as stated elsewhere, if he transgresses a negative precept. IF HIS SIN BE MADE KNOWN TO HIM: because in the pride of his heart he did not notice his sin, but afterwards it was pointed out to him and he repented.'

R. Judah and R. Jose were sitting and studying the Torah one night. Said R. Judah: 'I observe that the Torah seems clearer by night than by day: how is this?' He replied: 'It is because the Written Law is explained by the Oral Law, and

the Oral Law has sway by night and is more active then than by day. When, therefore, it holds sway, the Torah is clearer.' R. Jose continued: 'It is written, "But he said not, Where is the God my maker, who giveth songs in the night" (Job XXXV, 10). As already stated, when the north wind awakes at midnight, it strikes the wings of the cock, which looks to see what it is, and then for the sake of the honour of its Master calls aloud to the sons of men. [23b] Then the faithful arise and give strength and power to the Community of Israel, and through this David and his sons inherit the kingdom for all generations. But if the cock calls and men continue to sleep in their beds and do not rise, then it claps its wings and says, Woe to so-and-so who contemns his Master, who deserts his Master, and heeds not His honour! When the day breaks a herald proclaims concerning him, "He did not say, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night, so as to assist in those praises." What is the meaning of "my Maker"? If a man rises in the middle of the night and engages in the chanting of the Law—for the true singing is only at night—when day comes the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Community of Israel adorn him with a thread of grace to keep him safe from all harm and shed light upon him among both upper and lower beings, and they make him every day a new creature; hence the expression "my Maker" (*'osai*, lit. makers), referring to the Holy One and the Community of Israel, or according to another explanation, to Abraham and the Community of Israel.'

IF ONE HATH MADE KNOWN TO HIM HIS SIN. If who has made known to him? And why is it not written, "if his sin is made known to him"? The truth is that the Holy One, blessed be He, bids the Community of Israel to make known to a man the sin which he has committed. And how does she make it known to him? By chastisement. So, too, we have learnt: When a man sins before God and heeds not his sin to repent before his Master and throws it behind his back, then his soul goes up and testifies before the Holy One, blessed be He. Then the King bids the Community of Israel to "make known to him his sin", and to chastise him. And

when chastisement comes upon him, then his spirit moves him to repent and he humbles himself and brings an offering; for it is through pride that he sins and forgets his sin. Said R. Jose: 'It is so assuredly, and so we find in the case of David that when he committed the sin with Bathsheba and forgot about it, God reminded him, saying, "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. XII, 7). But if a man wakes at night to study the Torah, then the Torah makes known to him his sin, and not through chastisement, but like a mother who gently chides her son, and he does not forget, but repents before his Master. It may be asked, seeing that David also used to rise at midnight to study, why was he warned by chastisement? The reason is that he transgressed against the very grade to which he was attached, and therefore he required to be chastised. His punishment, in fact, fitted his crime: he sinned against the holy Kingdom and Jerusalem, and therefore he was driven from Jerusalem and his kingdom was taken from him, until [24a] he had made sufficient atonement.' R. Judah asked why David was punished at the hand of his son. R. Jose answered: 'As has been explained, because another man would have shown him no mercy.' 'But', said R. Judah, 'Absalom sought to kill his father and devised worse evil against him than a stranger would have done?' R. Jose said: 'I have not heard any answer to this.' Said R. Judah: 'I have heard an explanation, namely, that David sinned against Bath Sheba (lit. the daughter of seven), so God said, "Let the son of the daughter of a strange god come and avenge her." And who was this? Absalom, who was the son of a "fair captive" (*v.* Deut. XXI, 10 *et sqq.*).' R. Jose then quoted the verse: "The Lord hath sworn by his right hand and by the arm of his strength" (Isa. LXII, 8). 'Whenever', he said, 'a man sins before God, there is a certain grade above which takes note of that sin to punish it; if the man repents, the sin is wiped out and judgement has no sway over him, but if not, that sin is inscribed with that grade. If he sins more, then another grade takes note of him and concurs with the previous grade, so that he requires a more fervent repentance. If he goes on sinning, further grades are added till the number of five is reached. When the Right Hand is thus

completed, the Left Hand concurs with the Right and merges in it, and then there is no further room for repentance. When the final judgement is thus pronounced, five fingers are locked in five, the Right Hand in the Left, and therefore when God desires to pronounce the final judgement, then, "'The Lord swears by his right hand and by the arm of his strength".' [24*b*]

IF A SOUL (*nefesh*) COMMIT A TRESPASS. R. Isaac said: 'It has been pointed out that the word *nefesh* (soul) is here used advisedly. Happy are the righteous who have a superior portion in the Holy One, blessed be He, the holy portion, in the sanctities of the King, because they sanctify themselves with the holiness of their Master. For whoever sanctifies himself, the Holy One, blessed be He, sanctifies him, as it is written, "And ye shall sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy" (Lev. XI, 44). If a man sanctifies himself below, heaven sanctifies him from above, and clothes him with a holy super-soul (*neshamah*), the inheritance of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Community of Israel. It is these who are called "sons of the Holy One", as it is written, "sons are ye to the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1). It is written, "Let the earth bring forth a living soul" (Gen. I, 24), this being the portion from which David inherited and became heir to the kingdom, as elsewhere explained. As has been stated, the soul is linked [25*a*] with the spirit, and the spirit with the super-soul. Happy those who obtain this noble heritage! Alas for the wicked whose souls do not even win them this world, much less the world to come! Of them it is written, "And the souls of thine enemies shall he sling out as from the hollow of a sling" (1 Sam. XXV, 29). For they wander about the world without finding a place to which to attach themselves, they are drawn into the side of impurity, and a herald proclaims of them: "When a soul commits a trespass, it defiles the sanctuary of the Lord, for it cannot enter into sanctity."

It may be asked, why is a goat brought as an offering (in this case), seeing that R. Simeon has said that a goat is an evil species, as its name indicates (*'ez* = *'az* = *impudent*)? However,

R. Simeon answered that there is a reason, because if a spirit of uncleanness passes over a man or he occupies himself with it, then a goat is his appropriate offering, as being akin to his sin. R. Simeon said further: 'Some are gifted with a super-soul (*neshamah*), some with the impulse of the spirit (*ruaḥ*), and some only with an ordinary soul (*nefesh*). Those who attain no higher than the ordinary soul cling to the side of uncleanness, and when they sleep unclean sides (spirits) come and cling to them and show them things in dreams, partly true and partly false. Hence heathens also see true things sometimes in their dreams. Now those evil species are of three grades. The highest are suspended in the air. The lowest mock men in their dreams. The intermediate grade tell men things partly true and partly false, but if true, only relating to the immediate future. As for the higher grade of those who are suspended in the air, when the soul (*nefesh*) of a man seeks to prepare itself for the reception of the spirit (*ruaḥ*), something issues from it and seeks to rise, and in so doing meets those spirits which tell it things that will happen both in the near and the more distant future, and it cleaves to that grade until it acquires spirit. When it has done so, the spirit issues forth and cleaves its way through rocks and mountains until it ascends among the holy angels, and there it learns many things before returning to its place. This is as far as man can attain in holiness until he is endowed with a super-soul (*neshamah*). When he acquires that super-soul, it ascends among the righteous who are bound up in the bundle of the living, and there it sees the delight of the King and regales itself with the supernal splendour. And when the holy Hind (Shekinah) awakes with the north wind, the soul comes down and that righteous one who has acquired it arises and strengthens himself like a lion in the study of the Torah till morning, and then he goes with that holy Hind to appear before the King to receive a thread of grace, [25*b*] and he is crowned with her before the King. Blessed', said R. Simeon, 'are those who possess a super-soul, who study the Torah, who worship the Holy King. Woe to the sinners who do not cleave to their Master and have no portion in the Torah. For he who has no portion in the Torah has no portion

either in the spirit or the super-soul, but he cleaves to the side of the evil species, having no portion in the holy King or in holiness. Woe to him when he shall leave this world, for he is a marked man to those evil species, pitiless dogs, emissaries of the fires of Gehenna. See now the difference between Israel and the nations. Even though an Israelite possess only an ordinary soul, yet a higher grade stands over him, and if he tries to acquire a spirit or super-soul, he can do so. But the heathen can never do so unless he becomes circumcised, when he acquires a soul from another place. If, however, an Israelite who is only in the grade of ordinary soul does not aspire to rise higher, his punishment is great. For there are men who cleave to that evil side because they are not endowed with more than this ordinary soul, and when this unclean spirit passes by them it rests upon them and they cleave to it. Thus their sin is from the side of that unclean spirit and their offering is a goat, a beast which comes from that side, and so is a fitting atonement.' Said R. Eleazar: 'It is written, "His body shall not remain all night on the tree . . . that thou defile not thy land" (Deut. XXI, 23). The reason is that the land is holy, and the unclean spirit must find no place in the holy land on which to rest. This being so, seeing that the spirit of uncleanness rests on this animal and it comes from the side of uncleanness, how can it be brought as an offering to the side of holiness?' R. Simeon replied: 'You have asked well, my son. The answer is as follows. It is written, "The Lord thy God is a devouring fire" (Deut. IV, 24). The fire of the Holy One, blessed be He, feeds on another fire. There are angels which chant praises before the Holy One, and as soon as they finish are consumed in the flames of a devouring fire. Below, too, God has empowered the fire of the altar to consume all that side in its flames so that naught of it should be left in the world, and the man who brings the offering prevails over it, and through the savour of the sacrifice the side of the evil spirit departs from him and he obtains atonement.'

R. Aḥa was once walking along when R. Ḥiya and R. Jose met him. Said R. Aḥa: 'Verily, being now three, we are fitted to receive the presence of the Shekinah.' So they went

along together. Said R. Aḥa; 'Let each one of us give a discourse on the Torah as we go.'

R. Ḥiya thereupon began with the verse: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness" (Isa. XV, 8). 'This verse', he said, 'contains a mystery of wisdom which we have learnt from the Holy Lamp (R. Simeon). The words "drop down" refer to the side of rain, which brings nourishment to all. Therefore the eyes of all the world are turned to the Holy One, blessed be He, because He gives food to all. Yet think not that this depends on the place called "heaven", for so it is written here "from above"; the rain in sooth comes from "above", from the Ancient Holy One, [26a] and not from the place called Heaven. "And let the skies pour down righteousness": since when the heavens receive this rain from the place above, then the skies pour down righteousness. What is meant by "skies" (*she-ḥakim*)? The place where manna is ground (*shaḥak*) for the righteous, where Victory and Majesty grind manna for the place called Righteous, or, rather, for the two Righteous Ones *Ẓaddik and Ẓedek*. Then "the earth opens" (*Ibid.*) beneath, and mankind "are fruitful with salvation". "Righteousness springs forth together": mercy and kindness abound and man's food is provided, and so joy is added to joy and all worlds are blessed.' Said R. Aḥa: 'Had I come but to hear this, it would have been sufficient.'

R. Jose then discoursed on the verse: "My heart is towards the governors of Israel that offered themselves willingly among the people, bless ye the Lord" (Judges V, 9). 'If a man', he said, 'desires earnestly to pray that blessings should be poured on earth from above, he should concentrate his mind on that recondite Stream, the deepest recess of all, where is the very beginning of the union of Father and Mother (*Ḥokmah* and *Binah*). So it says here, "My heart is to the governors of Israel", to wit, to those, the Father and Mother, who trace out laws for the Holy Israel who flows out from between them. "That offer themselves willingly (*mithnadevim*) among the people": these are the Fathers who are called *nedivim*. Then, "bless ye the Lord", that blessings may flow from him below and fill the world. Happy

are Israel that God pours down blessings upon them and listens to their prayer; of them it is written, "He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute and hath not despised their prayer" (Ps. CII, 18).

ẒAV

Leviticus VI, 8–VIII, 36[1]

THE FIRE OF THE ALTAR SHALL BE KEPT BURNING THEREON. Said R. Aḥa: 'Why so? And why shall "the priest burn wood on it every morning"? Why the priest in particular? Have we not learnt that fire in every place symbolises judgement, whereas the priest is from the Right and is far from Judgement? The truth is, however, as we have learnt, that when a man inclines to sin before his Master, he burns himself in the flame of the evil imagination, which comes from the side of the unclean spirit, [27b] so that the unclean spirit rests on him. Therefore certain offerings have been marked as coming from this side, so that the like may be offered on the altar. For that unclean spirit is not burnt away and removed either from a man or from the side from which it comes save through the fire on the altar; and the purpose of the priest is to prepare the fire to burn the evil species out of the world. Hence it is requisite that the fire should never be quenched or allowed to become too feeble to break the force of this alien power: wherefore it says, "It shall not go out". And the priest is to put fire upon it every morning at the time when his own side is in the ascendant in order to mitigate stern judgement and keep away chastisement from the world. Regarding this we have learnt that there is a "fire consuming fire". The supernal fire consumes another fire, and similarly the fire of the altar consumes another fire. Therefore this fire must never go out, and the priest must trim it every day. [30a]

FIRE SHALL BE KEPT BURNING UPON THE ALTAR CONTINUALLY; IT SHALL NOT GO OUT. R. Ḥiya said: 'This fire is the fire of Isaac, who said (at the time of the binding), "Behold the fire and the wood" (Gen. XXII, 7), which perpetually exists. We have learnt that from the fire of Isaac

[1] The opening passage of this section is repeated with minor variations from Zohar, Exodus, 238b ("The burnt offering symbolizes") to 239b ("of the Tabernacle").

there issue forth to the altar certain coals, one to the east side, one to the west side, one to the north side, and one to the south side. Now there is on the altar a footway with a certain number of steps, and the lowest step reaches to the abyss which is the highest of six, and when the coals mentioned above reach the four corners of the altars a spark shoots forth and descends to that highest abyss. In that place there are numerous hosts who proclaim "holy" with a loud voice, and on another side they say "holy" with a soft and wondrous voice, and on another side there are yet other hosts which say "holy". There are six hundred thousand myriads in each corner, all under one commander, and all clad in an ephod, who are there to carry out the service of the altar in correspondence with those on earth. In another place the waves of the sea roar and descend a certain number of degrees, and there other hosts proclaim with the voice of song: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. III, 12). Their song of praise is not stilled day or night, and all make melody. In another place are hosts who stand in fear and trembling. All look towards that supernal altar. When the fire of Isaac reaches the altar sparks fly about on every side, and from them many mighty beings are set aflame. And did not the priest stand by the altar and lay in order the wood, the world could not stand before them. From the sparks which issue the backs of those "living creatures" are set aflame (Ezek. I, 13). On the right side of those "living creatures" a certain wind stirs from above which blows upon that fire, so that it settles down with a steady flame and gives light to the hosts standing on the right side. Then on the left side rises a strong wind breaking the rocks which blows upon that fire and makes it burn fiercely, till it gives light to the hosts on that side. And so on all four sides for the four camps. But all are appeased when the priest goes up to the altar.'

R. Abba said: 'There are two altars below and two altars above. Of the latter one, the innermost of all, [30b] is that on which is offered the inner fine incense, which is the bond of faith, and the most high Priest of all offers this incense with the bond of faith. This is called the Altar of Gold, the

place where all the threads of faith are bound together. There is another altar called the Altar of Brass, which is more external and on which Michael the great chief brings the pleasing offering of the Holy One, blessed be He. On earth there are correspondingly the altar of gold and the altar of brass, on the one of which was offered incense and on the other fat and limbs. It is written, "Oil and incense rejoice the heart" (Prov. XXVII, 9), but not fat and limbs, although these, too, allay wrath. The altar which is the innermost of all, the linking of faith, is called "a still silent voice", and in relation to this the other altar is called the "outer" one. The inner one is called "the altar of the Lord" and the other one "the altar of brass". Said R. Abba: 'When Moses built an altar (Ex. XVII, 15), he meant it to correspond to that inner one, and therefore he called it "The Lord is my banner", because it was stamped with the sign of the holy covenant. This is the inner Altar, the "still silent voice", and on this "fire shall be burnt continually", that is, the perpetual Fire, the Fire of Isaac. The proper name for this is Adonai, but when the priest puts wood on the altar we call it by the name of mercy, Jehovah; sometimes it answers to one and sometimes to the other.' R. Simeon said that there were two, the inner supported on the outer and fed from it, the two being thus linked together.

THIS IS THE OBLATION OF AARON. Said R. Hizkiah: 'How solicitous should men be for the honour of their Master, and how careful not to turn aside from the right way, for every day punishment impends over the world, and man never knows when it may fall. If he sits in his house, judgement impends over him; if he goes abroad, judgement impends over him, and he does not know if he will return or not. Therefore he should in time beseech for mercy from the King, for every day judgement impends over the world, as it is written, "*El* (God) hath indignation every day" (Ps. VII, 12). Now the Companions have pointed out that the name "*El*" properly indicates lovingkindness; why, then, is it used here, and also in the expression *El Gibbor* (mighty God) (Isa. IX, 6)? The answer is that, as we have learnt, the

wicked turn mercy into judgement, since in all the supernal crowns of the Holy King, mercy and judgement are intertwined.' Said R. Judah to him: 'This accounts for the expression *El Gibbor;* but what of "*El* hath indignation every day", which means that on every day He punishes, whether men are guilty or not?' He could not answer him, so they went and asked R. Simeon. He said: 'The Companions have explained that the name *El* indicates sometimes mercy and sometimes [31*a*] judgement. If men are virtuous, *El* is there standing for lovingkindness, and if they are not deserving, *El* is there standing for severity and is called *Gibbor*. The real truth, however, is as follows. *El* everywhere stands for the light of the supernal Wisdom which exercises its influence every day, and without which the world could not stand a day before the heavy chastisements that arise every day against it. For *El* is indignant with them and thrusts them away and so establishes the world, which otherwise could not exist an instant. As for the expression *El Gibbor*, the whole verse in which this occurs is an epitome of the holy supernal faith. The word "Wonderful" alludes to the supernal Wisdom, which is wondrous and concealed beyond the reach of all; "Counsellor" is the supernal stream which issues forth perennially and counsels all and waters all; "*El*" refers to Abraham, "*Gibbor*" to Isaac, and "Everlasting Father" to Jacob, who lays hold of both sides and attains perfection. The "Prince of Peace" is the *Ẓaddik*, who brings peace to the world, peace to the House, peace to the Matrona.' R. Hizkiah and R. Judah came and kissed his hands, and weeping with joy exclaimed: 'Happy are we that we asked this question. Happy is the generation in whose midst thou art!'

THIS (*zeh*) IS THE OBLATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS WHICH THEY SHALL OFFER UNTO THE LORD. Sinners cause the Holy One, blessed be He, to part from the Community of Israel; they separate *zeh* (this, masc.) from *zoth* (this, fem.), who should form one pair. So the holy Aaron comes with his sons, and through them they are brought together again, and *zeh* is united with *zoth;* hence it is written, "with this (*bezoth*) shall Aaron come to the holy place"

(Lev. XVI, 3). You might ask, then, why is it not written here, *zoth* (this) is the offering of Aaron, to restore *zoth* to its place? The reason is that the priest commences from above, bringing the *zeh* to unite with the *zoth*—happy is his portion in this world and the next!

As R. Ḥiya and R. Jose were once going from Usha to Tiberias, the latter said: 'It is written, "Ye shall sanctify yourselves [31*b*] and ye shall be holy" (Lev. XI, 44). We know that if a man sanctifies himself here below, he is further sanctified from above, and that if he defiles himself here below, he is further defiled from above. Now that he should be sanctified from above is fit and proper, since the holiness of his Master rests upon him; but from whence is he defiled? From above? And is there, then, defilement above?' R. Ḥiya replied: 'This is the meaning of what we have learnt, that any activity below stimulates a corresponding activity above. If the activity below is one of holiness, it stimulates holiness above to rest upon the doer and sanctify him. And if the man defiles himself below, a spirit of defilement is aroused above and comes and rests upon him, defiling him further. For there is no good or evil, holiness or defilement, which has not its root and source above. And just as action below stimulates action above, so words below stimulate words above—that is to say, decision couched in words. This word above is called "the word of the Lord"; for so we have learnt, that the word from below ascends and cleaves the firmaments until it reaches the place where it sets in motion either good or evil, according to its own character; hence it is written, "thou shalt keep thyself from every evil word (*dabar*)" (Deut. XXIII, 9).'

There[1] are four species in the *lulab* (palm-branch) which diverge into seven, and through their employment corresponding ones are roused above to benefit the world in various ways. And though the Community of Israel is one of these Seven, yet She is herself blessed from the other six and from the Stream which issues from the perennial source. The lower world is also blessed from them through this impulse,

[1] This passage, to "spoken and done" (p. 385), should properly be attached to Leviticus XXIII.

for when the Community of Israel is blessed by them all worlds are blessed. For this reason it was customary to go in procession round the altar on this festival (Tabernacles).[1] We have learnt in the Book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder that the Powers which are in charge of these plants receive each one their blessings of joy above only at this time, and the gladness of those above and of these trees below is all at this season, and so when Israel lift up these branches, all is roused to activity at this time and the Community of Israel is blessed, so as to pour down blessings on the world. In Psalm XXIX, the "Voice of the Lord" is mentioned seven times, and R. Jose explained them thus: "The voice of the Lord is on the waters"; this is Abraham. "The voice of the Lord is in strength"; this is Isaac. "The voice of the Lord is in beauty"; this is Jacob. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars"; this is *Neẓah* (Victory). "The voice of the Lord heweth flames of fire"; this is *Hod* (Majesty). "The voice of the Lord causeth the wilderness to tremble"; this is *Zaddik* (Righteous One). And all bring blessings on to the world from the replenishment which they themselves receive. On all other days of the year these Seven are roused to activity by the prayer of men's mouth, but on this day it depends on action, and we require action, because at this season the whole year is blessed.

On the seventh day of Tabernacles the judgement of the world is finally sealed and the edicts are sent forth from the King, and God's might is aroused, and the "willows of the brook"[2] depend on it, and we require to awaken the might which sends the rain and to go round the altar seven times and sate it with the water of Isaac, because the well of Isaac is filled with water, and then all the world is blessed with water. We therefore pray that the rain-giving power may be manifested, and afterwards destroy willow twigs, since [32a] judgement is closed on this day. R. Ḥiya said: 'In reference to this day, it is written: "And Isaac returned and dug the wells of water" (Gen. XXVI, 18). Isaac (symbolizing Geburah), having sat on the Throne of Judgement on the first day of the seventh month, now pours might upon the

[1] *v.* T. B. Succah. [2] *Neẓah* and *Hod*.

Community of Israel to set the waters in motion. Hence all depends on the appropriate action (of taking the four species).

On this day the idolatrous nations come to the end of their blessings and enter into judgement, and Israel come to the end of their punishments and enter into blessings. For on the next day (Eighth Day of Assembly) they are to rejoice in the King and to receive from Him blessings for all the year. This joy is reserved for Israel alone, and they are, as it were, the private guest of the king who can obtain any request which he makes. In reference to this it is written, "I love you, saith the Lord, and Esau I hate" (Mal. I, 2–3). Said R. Jose: 'We see that Esau is prosperous and dominant, with great cities and wide power, and yet you say, "And I have made his mountains desolate" (*Ibid.* 3)?' He replied: 'This is a frequent figure of speech. When the Holy King has pronounced a decree and placed it in his archives, the Scripture speaks of it as if it were already accomplished. And so with all the blessings which God has decreed for Israel, as it is written, "I, the Lord, have spoken and done" (Ezek. XVII, 24).

AND THIS IS THE LAW OF THE GUILT OFFERING. R. Isaac said: 'It has been explained that if this refers to what is below, then the other similar expressions ("this is the law of the meal offering", "this is the law of the sin offering", "this is the law of the peace offering") refer to what is below; and if this refers to what is above, then they also refer to what is above. Whoever engages in the study of the Torah obtains a portion in all and is attached to all sides and does not need to bring an offering for his soul, as has been explained.'

R. Isaac expounded the verse: "The priests said not, Where is the Lord, and they that handle the law knew me not; the shepherds also transgressed against me" (Jer. II, 8). 'By the "priests" here', he said, 'are meant the high priests who bring holy words to their place and proclaim each unity in the fitting way. "They that handle the law" are here the Levites who handle the harps which come from the side of the Law, and from whose side the Law was given and who

are appointed to sing praises to the Holy King and complete His unity. The "shepherds" are the leaders of the people who care for them as a shepherd cares for his flock. These three classes must always be present by the offering, that it may be pleasing above and below and that blessings may be in all worlds. The priest brings the offering with intent to unify the Holy Name and to awaken the side to which he is attached. The Levites by their song endeavour to rouse the side to which they are attached [32*b*] and to merge it in the side of the priest. The Israelite seeks to make his heart contrite and humble before God the Holy King, and so his sin is forgiven and there is joy above and below.'

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters", etc. (Ps. CIV, 3). 'When', he said, 'God created the world, He brought it forth from water and established it on water. He divided the waters in two, one half above and the other half below, and from each half created a world. Out of the lower half He made this world, which he established on this half of the waters, as it is written: "For he hath founded it upon the seas" (Ps. XXIV, 2). The upper half He took aloft, and made with it upper chambers, and on this half He established supernal holy beings made from the spirit which was detached from His mouth, as it is written, "And through the breath of his mouth all their hosts" (Ps. XXXIII, 6). Among these he appointed some to sing His praises, fiery hosts, who sing praises in the morning and songs at even, all ceasing at night. Above them are hosts of a still more fiery nature who breathe fire and eat it, and then return to their places. In the other side there are abysses, one above the other, in all of which are executioners of judgement from the side of stern justice. In the lowest depth there are flames that burn flames, fires for the punishment of sinners issuing from the "river of fire", all fiery and flaming, situated between the higher and the lower. But when the smoke of the altar ascends, they leave that place where they were standing to destroy and annihilate, and the stream of flaming fire from the "river of fire" returns to its place and all enjoy the smoke from the altar when it goes straight towards the most high King. We have explained

that it is the desire of each one to ascend above in order to please the Holy King, and Uriel appears there like a mighty lion crouching over his prey. When the priests and the Israelites saw this they rejoiced because they knew that the sacrifice was acceptable to the Holy King. Then another holy fire from above came down to meet the fire from below, and men trembled before their Master and repented. As a king to whom an acceptable present had been sent might say to his servant, Go and take this present which has been brought to me, so the Holy One, blessed be He, says to Uriel, Go and receive the present which my sons offer me. How great is the joy, how great the sweetness everywhere when the priest, the Levite and the bringer of the sacrifice are intent to bring the offering with perfect devotion! When, however, Israel were not virtuous or the sacrifice was not brought in the proper spirit, and was not accepted, they used to observe that the smoke did not ascend in a straight line, being blown aside by a wind from the hollow of the north, and they used to see the likeness of an impudent dog lying on the offering, and then they knew that it was not acceptable. As a king to whom an unworthy present has been brought might say, Take this present and give it to the dog, so when the offering was unacceptable it was given as a gift to the dog. [33*a*] R. Judah said: 'When the fire went forth from the altar and consumed the offering (Lev. IX, 24), this was Uriel, who appeared in a flame on the altar; [33*b*] and had it not been for the misfortune of the sons of Aaron, there would have been no day when God was more pleased with Israel from the time they left Egypt. And the death of the sons of Aaron was deserved for many reasons. One was that they offered incense at the wrong time—at a time when oil and incense were not together (i.e. not when the lamp was lit, *v.* Ex. XXX, 7). Another was that they thrust themselves forward in the place of their father. A third was that they were not married; [34*a*] for such are not meet to bring blessings into the world. And a fourth was that they were intoxicated with wine.

THIS (*zoth*) IS THE ANOINTING PORTION OF AARON

AND OF HIS SONS. R. Jose said: '*Zoth* (Shekinah) indeed is the anointing portion of Aaron, for he brought of the oil of the supernal anointing and caused it to flow below; and by the hand of Aaron *zoth* was anointed with the holy anointing and drew blessing therefrom. From this oil blessings flow by the hand of the priest, and the priest causes it to flow below and anoints this *zoth;* hence, "this (*zoth*) is the anointing portion of Aaron, etc." '

TAKE AARON AND HIS SONS WITH HIM, AND THE GARMENTS. R. Hiya quoted here the verse: "For with thee is the fountain of life, in thy light we shall see light" (Ps. XXXVI, 9). 'The fountain of life', he said, 'is the supernal oil which flows continually and is stored in the midst of that most high Wisdom, from which it never separates. It is the source which dispenses life to the supernal Tree and kindles the lights (of the emanations). And that tree is called the Tree of Life, because it is planted on account of that source of life. Therefore, too, "in thy light we shall see light"—in that light which is treasured for the righteous in the world to come, and with which Israel [34*b*] will be illuminated. Or again, "with thee" may refer to the Holy One, blessed be He, who is a most high Tree in the midst of the Garden reaching out to all sides, because it clings to the source of life, which crowns it with supernal crowns all around the Garden like a mother who crowns her son.' R. Isaac said that the words refer to the High Priest above who corresponds to the high priest below. Therefore this Priest causes the supernal holy oil to flow down and kindle the lamps above. And just as the High Priest above is consummated with seven Days to be exalted above all, so there were seven days of consecration for the priest below, that lower might correspond to upper. The word for consecration (*miluim*, lit. filling) implies that they are completed by the priest, through being united with seven other days, for when the priest below bestirs himself, all above is stimulated through him, and blessings are spread above and below. R. Abba said that the reason why Moses anointed Aaron was because he was attached to the place which is the source

of life, and Moses ministered all the seven days of the consecration to make all abide with Aaron.

When R. Hizkiah was once studying with R. Eleazar, he asked him: 'How many lights were created before the world was created?' He answered: 'Seven: namely, the light of the Torah, the light of Gehenna, the light of the Garden of Eden, the light of the Throne of Glory, the light of the Temple, the light of repentance, the light of the Messiah. Similarly seven lights were attached to Aaron, and he lit the lower lamps from the higher.' R. Eleazar quoted the verse: "All was from the dust" (Eccles. III, 20). 'We have learnt', he said, 'that everything is from the dust, even the orb of the sun. But from what dust? From that which is under the holy Throne of Glory. In the Book of Rab Yeba the Elder it says that paths went forth in all directions and then met again to give light, like dust that is thrown in all directions and yet returns again to the dust. The dust was that of the Sanctuary, which again was from the supernal dust.

'The Community of Israel is called "bride", as it says, "Thou art all fair, my love" (S.S. IV, 7). She is also called "a kingdom of priests" when blessed by the priests, since the priests enthrone her and give her power, making her queen over all the treasures and armoury of the King, over higher and lower, over the whole world.' [35*a*] R. Jose said: 'It is written, "He hath established his bond upon the earth" (Amos IX, 6), namely, when the King joins her with all his holy Crowns in one company, for then She rules over all and shines above and below; and this at the time when the priest performs his service and brings the offering and burns the incense, uttering fitting prayer the while.' R. Jose said: 'When Aaron raised his hands, all raised with him, until the Community of Israel was blessed and higher and lower angels with her. Hence it says, "Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, who dwelleth in Jerusalem, Hallelujah" (Ps. CXXXV, 21).'

As R. Eleazar was once going from Cappadocia to Lydda, accompanied by R. Jose and R. Hizkiah, he began to discourse thus: 'It is written, "And I have put my words in thy mouth and have covered thee in the shadow of my hand" (Isa. LI, 16). We have been taught', he said, 'that if a man

studies the words of the Torah and ever has them on his lips, God protects him and the Shekinah spreads her wings over him; nay more, he supports the world and God rejoices over him as if He had that day planted heaven and earth, as it says, "to plant heaven and to lay the foundations of the earth, and to say to Zion, thou art my people" (*Ibid.*); from this we learn that Israel are called Zion.' He further discoursed on the verse: "Bind the testimony, seal up the law among my disciples" (Isa. VIII, 16). 'The testimony is that of David, referred to in the verse, "My testimony that I shall teach them" (Ps. CXXXII, 12). The seal of the law and of all the abundance that flows from above is where? "In my disciples"; for there is the abundance gathered between the two pillars (*Neẓaḥ* and *Hod*) that stand there, and so all is tied firmly with one trusty knot. What, now, is the difference between those who study the Torah and faithful prophets? The former are ever superior, since they stand on a higher level. Those who study the Torah stand in a place called *Tifereth* (Beauty), which is the pillar of all faith, whereas the prophets stand lower in the place called *Neẓaḥ* (Victory) and *Hod* (Majesty); and those who merely speak in the spirit of holiness stand lower still. He who studies the Torah needs neither peace offerings nor burnt offerings, since the Torah is superior to all and the bond of faith; wherefore it is written "Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace" (Prov. III, 17), and also, "Great peace have they which love thy law and they have no occasion for stumbling" (Ps. CXIX, 165).'

As they were going along, they came across a man with three myrtle branches in his hand. They went up to him and said: 'What is this for?' He replied: 'To refresh the fainting one.'[1] Said R. Eleazar: 'That is a good answer. But why three?' He replied: 'One for Abraham, one for Isaac, and one for Jacob; and I bind them together and smell them, because the scent refreshes the soul, and by this act of faith blessings are drawn down from above.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Happy is the lot [35b] of Israel in this world and in the world to come. Mark now. The vital soul is only kept up by

[1] The *nefesh* (soul), *v. infra.*

smell, and this smell brings to mind another, for when Sabbath departs and the additional soul departs, the soul and the spirit are separated and sad until the smell comes and unites them and makes them glad. In the same way all (attributes) are united by the smell of the sacrifice and the lamps are kindled and gladdened. If one lamp is placed above another and the lower one is lit, the smoke as it ascends kindles the upper one also. So the smoke of the sacrifices, as it ascends, kindles the supernal lamps till they all flame together and unite through this smell, so that there is "a sweet savour to the Lord". Thus the smell of the offering is the support of all and is produced by the priest who brings all together; and therefore seven days of fulfilment were completed in him in order that all may be blessed through his service, and there may be blessing and joy above and below.'

SHEMINI

Leviticus IX, 1–XI, 47

AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE EIGHTH DAY. R. Isaac said: 'Happy are Israel in that God has given them a holy Law which is the universal delight, the joy of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His recreation, as it is written, "and I was daily his delight" (Prov. VIII, 30). The Torah is all one name of the Holy One, blessed be He. By the Torah was the world created, as it is written, "And I was an artificer with him" (*Ibid.*). By the Torah, too, was man created, as it is written, "And God said, Let us make man" (Gen. I, 26). Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to the Torah: "I desire to create man." She replied: "This man is destined to sin and to provoke Thee unless Thou art long-suffering with him; how, then, shall he endure?" To which God replied: "I and thou shall maintain him, for not for nothing am I called 'long-suffering'." ' R. Hiya said that the Oral and the Written Law together preserve mankind, as it is written: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness"—"image" having reference to the Masculine and "likeness" to the Feminine; and for this reason the Torah commences with the letter *Beth* (ב=2), as already explained. R. Isaac said: 'Why is the *beth* open on one side and closed on the other? To show that when a man comes [36a] to attach himself to the Torah, it is open to receive him and to join with him; and when a man closes his eyes to it and walks in the other way, then it turns its closed side to him, according to the saying: "If thou leavest me one day, I will leave thee two days", until he returns to attach himself to it, never again to abandon it. Therefore the Torah makes the first approaches to men, proclaiming, "Unto you, O men, I call" (Prov. VIII, 4); and it is also written of her, "she crieth in the chief places of concourse, at the entering in of the gates" (*Ibid.* I, 21).' R. Judah said: 'The *beth* has two parallel lines and a third joining them. What do these signify? One for heaven, one for earth, and one for the Holy One, blessed be He, who

unites and receives them.' R. Eleazar said: 'These represent three supernal and closely connected holy lights in which the whole Torah is comprised, and which provide the introduction to faith. Therefore to study the Torah is like studying the Holy Name, as we have said, that the Torah is all one holy supernal name. Therefore it commences with the letter *beth*, which symbolizes the holy name with three bonds of faith. All those who study the Torah cleave to the Holy One, blessed be He, and are crowned with the crowns of the Torah and beloved above and below, and God stretches out to them His right hand; and all the more to those who study at night, who, as we have stated, are associated with the Shekinah and joined with her. When morning comes the Holy One, blessed be He, winds round them a thread of grace to distinguish between the higher and the lower ranks, and all the stars of the morning, what time the Community of Israel and those who study the Torah come to appear before the King, break forth into song together, as it is written, "When the morning stars sing together and the sons of God shout for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7).'

R. Eleazar was once travelling along a road on which R. Phineas ben Yair happened to be coming towards him. The ass on which R. Phineas was riding whinnied, and he said: 'Verily, from the note of gladness in the ass's voice, I see that I shall meet someone here.' When he emerged from under the brow of the hill he saw R. Eleazar approaching, and said: 'Assuredly, the omen of the ass's voice has been fulfilled.' R. Eleazar then came up to him and kissed him. He said to him: 'If you have the same destination as I have, let us join company, and if not, go your way.' He replied: 'Indeed, I was going to look for you, and since I have found you I will follow you and we can keep company.' R. Phineas then began a discourse on the verse: "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem" etc. (Ps. CXXVIII, 5). 'Why', he said, "from Zion"? Because there blessings repose, as it is written, "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Ps. CXXXIII, 3). And for the sake of Zion Jerusalem is blessed and visited with mercy, and when Jerusalem is blessed all

the people are blessed. The words "all the days of thy life" mean that the rainbow shall not be seen in thy days any more than in the days of thy father.[1] "And see thy children to thy children", god-fearing, saintly and holy. "Peace upon Israel": as who should say. "Peace upon the head of the king that he may lack nothing." So there is peace upon Israel when righteous men are in the world.'

R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: "Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers" (Prov. XVII, 6). 'The word "children" ', he said, 'has its well-known esoteric meaning. "Children's children" are the other crowns of the King, and of them it says that "the glory of children are their fathers", because the sons are only crowned through the fathers. From this we learn that the sons are only crowned and revived by the running Stream when the Fathers are crowned and blessed.' [36b]

As they were going along the time for prayer arrived, so they dismounted and said their prayers. While they were praying a serpent wound itself round the legs of the ass of R. Phineas, which thereupon uttered two cries. When they had finished praying R. Phineas said: 'I can understand my animal being in pain, because earlier in the day, while I was meditating on the Torah, it took me through some filth; hence now it is being hurt.' As they stood up they saw a snake coiled round its legs, whereupon R. Phineas said: "Snake, go and wind yourself round your own hole." At this the snake dissolved and fell into pieces. Said R. Eleazar: 'Is God so particular with the righteous?' He replied: 'Verily He is, and He takes note of all their errors, and desires to raise their holiness to a still higher level. This ass has been tormented because it did not guard my holiness, and this snake was a divine messenger. And how many agents has the Almighty, even beasts of the field and even idolaters, as it says, "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the ends of the earth" (Deut. XXVIII, 49).' R. Eleazar asked: 'Does God ever make an Israelite His agent?' He replied: 'Yes: that is, a pious Israelite to punish a wicked

[1] The appearance of the rainbow was supposed to indicate a lack of virtue in the generation. Cf. Zohar, Gen. 225a.

one, but not one wicked one to punish another, save when he does so accidentally, as it is written, "but God deliver him into his hand" (Ex. XXI, 13), in order to punish both of them.' Said R. Eleazar: 'How does God use such Israelites and idolaters as His agents?' 'Has not your father told you?' said R. Phineas. 'I have never yet asked him,' he replied. R. Phineas thereupon began by quoting the verse: "When he giveth quietness who then can condemn?" etc. (Job XXXIV, 29). 'When God', he said, 'gives quietness and ease to a man, who is there that is authorized to injure and malign him? And when He withdraws His watchful providence from him, who can keep watch over him to protect him? And in this God's ways are "unto a man or a nation alike"—the same for the world or for a people or for an individual. For when men's actions are virtuous on earth, then the Right Hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, is active for them above, and many friends and protectors come forward on their behalf above on the right and on the left, and the Left Hand is subdued and kept under control. But when men's actions on earth are not virtuous, then the Left is awakened, and all those who come from the side of the left with it, and all become agents to inflict harm on men. For all who transgress the precepts of the Law receive a mark on their faces through which they are recognized by those who rise up from the side of the left. Hence serpents and idolaters, and all who come from the side of the left, are called "agents" in regard to those who bear this mark. Now Israelites, even if their actions are not virtuous, still come from the side of the right, but because the right has been paralysed by their actions the left has power over them, and those who come from the side of the left. Hence the agents chosen for punishing them are serpents and idolaters, and such-like who are from the side of the left, but not other Israelites, even sinners, because they are still from the side of the right. And if it happens that a sinful Israelite falls into the hand of another Israelite sinner, this is that they may both be punished and be purified by their punishment.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Whence do you derive all this?' He answered: 'From the incident of the concubine in Gibeah (Judges XX). For though the sinners

there were Israelites, God was unwilling that other sinners of Israel should be the instruments for punishing them, and therefore numbers of them fell time after time until all the sinners in the attacking army had perished, and there were left in it only those [37a] more righteous ones who could more appropriately execute the work. And even righteous Israelites are made the agents only when the two worlds, the upper and lower, are evenly balanced, and at that time [of the incident of Gibeah] they were not evenly balanced. Hence sinners of Israel are not made the agents of the King to punish other sinners of Israel, since they do not come from the side of the left. We may illustrate by the following parable. Certain men having offended against the king, an officer was charged to arrest and punish them. One clever fellow among them went and mixed himself with the officer's men. The officer, however, detected him and said: "Who said you could join us? Are you not one of those who have offended against the king? You shall be punished first." So Israel come from the side of the right and do not attach themselves to the left or mingle with it. Sometimes, however, through their sins they cause the Right to be weakened and the Left to be aroused, with all those that belong to it. Should, then, an Israelite try to insinuate himself among them, if they detect him they say: "Are you not one of those who come from the side of the right which is enfeebled because of their sins? Are you not one of those who have sinned against the king? Who allowed you to come amongst us?" So he is punished first. And King Solomon points openly to these people in the words: "What time one man hath power over another to his hurt" (Eccles. VIII, 9)—verily to his own hurt, because he is not the agent of the king and does not come from that side.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Verily it is so, since we have learnt that there is a left and there is a right, mercy and judgement, Israel to the right and the idolatrous nations to the left. Israel, although they sin and are humbled, yet they belong to the right and do not cleave to the left nor mingle with it. Therefore it is written, "Save thy right hand and answer us" (Ps. LX, 6), for when the Right Hand is exalted, Israel that cleave to it are exalted and crowned

through it, and then the Left Hand and all who come from its side are humbled with it; hence it is written: "Thy right hand, O Lord, breaketh in pieces the enemy" (Ex. XV, 6).'

R. Eleazar then discoursed on the verse: "And it came to pass on the eighth day", etc. He said: 'This "eighth day" has reference to the preceding statement. "for he shall consecrate you seven days" (Lev. VIII, 33). Why seven days? Happy indeed are the priests who are crowned with the crowns of the holy King, and anointed with the holy oil, because thereby is put in motion the supernal oil which moistens all the Seven and from which the seven lamps are lit, this oil comprising them all, as we have learnt that there are six, and this is the consummation of all; hence, "seven days he shall consecrate you". Therefore, too, the Community of Israel is called "Bathsheba" (lit. daughter of seven), because She is the consummation of six others. After this septet had perfected the priests and crowned them and anointed them, when they reached the Community of Israel, which is the eighth, Aaron was commanded to offer a calf, to atone for the sin of that other calf which Aaron made, thereby sinning against the "cow", which is the eighth, the completion of the guardians of Israel. Thus the priest is found complete in all, in the eight different vestments and in all crowns, complete above and below. Now, on all solemn occasions some act must be manifested, and therefore a ceremony was performed with Aaron below to produce a corresponding reaction above, and in this way worlds were blessed through the mediation of the priest. Aaron had to bring a calf for a sin-offering on account of the sin he had previously committed. Also a ram for a burnt-offering. Why a ram? Because of the ram of Isaac, who was a perfect burnt-offering, and this also was brought to make the sacrifice complete. Thus the calf was brought for its own sake and the ram to complete it [37b] duly with the perfection of Isaac. Israel, who shared the sin of the priest, had to bring a similar offering, viz., "an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord", an ox for their sin and a ram to complete this place with the perfection of Isaac. The term "sin-offering" is not used in connection with Israel as with the

priest, because Israel had already suffered their punishment in many places, and therefore God did not wish to mention their sin; hence it is written here, "for a peace offering" and not "for a sin-offering", as a sign of peace, to show that God had been reconciled with Israel in respect of this. Aaron, however, who had been saved from punishment through the prayer of Moses (*v.* Deut. IX, 20), and whose guilt still hung over him, had to bring a sin-offering, that his sin might be atoned for and that he should be purified and whole. On that day upper and lower beings reached their perfection, and there was peace everywhere in the joy of heaven and earth, and but for the tragedy of the sons of Aaron on that day there would have been no such joy above and below from the day that the Israelites came up from the Red Sea. On that day the sin of the Golden Calf was wiped out, and priests and people were cleansed of it. On that day all the accusers above were silenced, and they circled round Israel without being able to find any spot at which to attack them until the hour arrived when Nadab and Abihu rose up and spoilt the general joy, and wrath descended on the world. We have learnt that on that day it was the joy of the Community of Israel to be united [with her Spouse] by the bond of faith with all holy ties (for the incense binds all—hence its name),[1] and they came and linked all the others together and left Her outside, and linked up something else.' Said R. Phineas to him: 'Do not say that they left her outside, but only that the Community of Israel was not united [to the rest] through them,[2] for wherever male and female are not found together, the Community of Israel does not abide. Therefore it is written, "With this shall Aaron come into the sanctuary" (Lev. XVI, 3), which was a warning to him that he should be male with female; and therefore a priest should not enter the sanctuary till he is married, in order that he may have a share in the union of the Community of Israel.' R. Jose referred in this connection to the verse: "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters" (S.S. II, 2). 'As has been explained,' he said, 'this verse is spoken

[1] *Ketoreth*, connected with *katar*, Aramaic for "bind". [2] Because they were not married.

by the Holy One, blessed be He, in praise of the Community of Israel in His love and desire for Her, and therefore it is a married man who should utter the praises of the Holy One, blessed be He, and of the Community of Israel. For, since he cleaves to his spouse and devotes his affection to her, when he comes to serve before the Holy God he awakens another love, that of the Holy One, blessed be He, for the Community of Israel. And for this the Holy One blesses him and the Community of Israel blesses him. [38a] For the Community of Israel is blessed by the priest and the Israelite is blessed by the priest, and the priest is blessed by the Supernal Priest, as it is said: "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel and I will bless them" (Num. VI, 27).'

It is written: "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been ever of old" (*me'olam*, lit. from the world, Ps. XXV, 6). "Mercies" here refers to Jacob and "lovingkindnessess' to Abraham. God takes them from the world and raises them aloft, and makes of them a holy Chariot to shield the world. So God does with all the righteous. It may be asked, why is there no reference to Isaac here? He was left over to punish those who oppress his offspring, and is referred to in the verse, "Arouse thy might" (Ps. LXXX, 3); and again, "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war" (Isa. XLII, 13). R. Hiya said: 'Jacob and Abraham we require to shield us, but Isaac's function is to make war, and therefore we do not desire him to be associated with them. We may also explain the words "for they are from the world" thus. When God created the world He took Isaac and created with him the world. He saw that it would not be able to endure, so He supported it with Abraham. He saw that it needed further support, so He took Jacob and joined him with Isaac. Hence the world is supported by Abraham and Jacob, and they are "from the world".'[1] [38b]

AND MOSES SAID UNTO ELEAZAR AND ITHAMAR, LET NOT THE HAIR OF YOUR HEADS GO LOOSE, ETC.... FOR THE

[1] The text here inserts a passage which in substance is merely a repetition of p. 37a, "R. Eleazar discoursed . . ." to p. 37b, "something else".

ANOINTING OIL OF THE LORD IS UPON YOU. R. Abba said: 'All joy above derives from the Holy Oil, from which issue gladness and blessings to all the Lamps, and with the stream of which the Supernal Priest is crowned. Therefore the priest on earth on whom the anointing oil has flowed must display a smiling and joyful countenance, and there must be no blemish on his head or his attire or anywhere else, that he may not cause a blemish in another place. Hence had Eleazar and Ithamar allowed any blemish to appear at that moment on their heads or their garments they would not have been delivered, for it was a time of judgement. So we have learnt that when a plague is rife a man should not apply himself to any undertaking lest he become a marked man. Hence it is written, "lest ye die. But let your brethren the whole house of Israel bewail the burning", because they did not come from the side of the priests, and therefore would not be injured.'

R. Eleazar here adduced the verse: "And Aaron took him Elisheba, the daughter of Aminadab, the sister of Nahshon, to wife" (Ex. VI, 23). 'Aaron', he said, 'acted fitly, copying the supernal model. "Elisheba" was destined for Aaron from the time of the Creation, just as "Bathsheba"[1] was destined for David from the time of the Creation. Both are one, but the one name refers to judgement, the other to mercy. When she was joined with David, it was for judgement, to wage war and shed blood. Here with Aaron it was for peace, for joy, for gladness and blessing. Hence with David she is called Bathsheba, and with Aaron Elisheba: Elisheba (lit. to seven) to show that she was joined to Grace; Bath-sheba (daughter of seven) to signify that she inherited royalty and power.[2] [39a] Hence, "Aaron took Elisheba" to gratify her, to rejoice her, to join her with the King in a perfect union, that blessings might be diffused through all worlds by means of Aaron. Hence the priest must be ever smiling and joyful, since he is the instrument of joy and blessing, and in this way punishment, wrath and gloom are

[1] v. p. 37a. [2] The text here introduces a brief digression on the esoteric significance of the "voice of the trumpet", the substance of which has already appeared elsewhere.

removed from him, that he may not be disqualified for the place to which he is linked.'

DRINK NO WINE NOR STRONG DRINK, THOU NOR THY SONS, ETC. R. Judah said: 'The fact that this injunction was given to the priests shows that Nadab and Abihu were under the influence of wine.' R. Ḥiya adduced here the verse: "Wine rejoiceth the heart of man" (Ps. CIV, 15). 'If', he said, the priest requires to be glad and smiling more than other men, why is he forbidden wine, which creates joy and smiles? The truth is that wine rejoices at first and saddens afterwards, and the priest must be glad throughout. Also wine is of the side of the Levites, but the side of the priests is pure and clear water.' R. Jose said: 'Each lends to the other, and therefore wine gladdens at first because it contains water, but afterwards it reverts to its own nature and brings gloom.' R. Abba said: 'Wine, oil and water issue from the same place. Water and oil, which are on the right, are taken by the priests, especially oil, which is joy first and last, as it is written: "Like the goodly oil upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard" (Ps. CXXXIII, 2). Wine, which is on the left, is inherited by the Levites, that they may raise their voices in song and not be silent, for wine is never silent, but oil is always noiseless. The difference between them is this. Oil comes from the side of Thought, which is always silent and unheard, whereas wine, which is for raising the voice, comes from the side of the Mother. Therefore the priest, when he entered the Sanctuary to perform divine service, was forbidden to drink wine, because his service is carried out quietly.'

R. Judah and R. Isaac were once going from Be Merunia to Sepphoris, and with them was a youth leading an ass, on which was a jar of honey. Said R. Judah: 'Let us discourse on the Torah as we go.' R. Isaac began by quoting the verse: "And thy palate is like the best wine that goeth down smoothly for my beloved" (S.S. VII, 9). 'This wine', he said, 'is the wine of the Torah, which is in truth good, because there is another wine which is not good. But the wine of the Torah is good for all—good for this world and good for the

world to come. This, too, is the wine that pleases the Holy One, blessed be He, more than all, and therefore he who quaffs deeply of the wine of the Torah will wake in the world to come and will come to life when God shall raise the righteous.' Said R. Judah: 'We have learnt that even in that world he will be able to study the Torah, as it is written, "He causeth to mutter the lips of the sleepers" (*Ibid.*).' The youth hereupon remarked: 'If it had been written, "thy palate is *from* the best wine", your explanation would have been correct, but it is written "*like* the best wine".' They looked at him, and R. Judah said: 'Speak on, for your remark is a good one.' He continued: 'I have heard that if a man who studies the Torah diligently allows his expositions to be heard and does not merely whisper them, [39b] then he is like good wine, which also is not silent and causes the voice to be raised. When he departs from this world, then "my beloved goeth straight forward", turning neither to the right nor the left, and none interferes with him; and in that world, too, his lips mutter words of the Torah. I have further heard that this verse was addressed to the Community of Israel in her praise. It may be asked, who is it that praises her thus, for if it is the Holy One, blessed be He, we should expect "for me" instead of "for my beloved". However, the Holy One does in truth praise the Community of Israel thus, in response to Her praises. As She says, "His palate is sweet", He replies, "Thy palate is like the best wine", to wit, the wine that has been treasured from the Creation. "My beloved" is Isaac, who is called "beloved from the womb", and "straight forward" means, to unite the left with the right, through the joy diffused by that wine. Hence "causing to mutter the lips of the sleepers", because all are awakened with joy and blessing, and all worlds rejoice and rouse themselves to pour down blessings below.' R. Judah and R. Isaac approached him joyfully and kissed him. They said to him: 'What is your name?' He replied: 'Jesse.' They said: 'You shall be Rabbi Jesse: you shall become more famous than our colleague Rabbi Jesse who has departed from us.' They then said to him: 'Who is your father?' He replied: 'He is no longer alive. He used to teach me every day three expositions

of the Torah, and every night three pieces of Agadaic lore. What I have just told you I learnt from my father, and now I live with a man who will not let me study, and makes me work all day, and so every day I go over again the things I learnt from my father.' They said to him: 'Does that man know anything of the Torah?' He replied: 'He does not. He is an old man and he cannot say Grace, and he has sons whom he does not send to school.' Said R. Judah: 'If that were not the case, I would go into that village to talk to him about you, but after what you tell me, it would be wrong of us to look at him. Leave your ass, therefore, and come along with us.' They then asked him who his father was. He replied: 'R. Zeira of Kfar Ramin.' On hearing this R. Judah wept and said: 'I was once in his house, and I learnt from him three things concerning the Cup of Benediction and two relating to the work of Creation.' Said R. Isaac: 'Seeing that we could learn from his son, how much more from himself!'

So they went along holding his hand until they came to a field where they sat down. They said to him: 'Tell us something that your father taught you concerning the work of Creation.' He thereupon discoursed on the verse: "And God created the great sea-monsters," etc. (Gen. 1, 21). He said: 'The name *Elohim* is usually applied to the place of judgement, but here it is applied to the most high place from which judgements issue, for although it is intrinsically a place of Mercy, yet judgements issue from it and depend upon it. The "great sea-monsters" are the "Patriarchs", which are watered first and spread their roots throughout all. "And every living creature" (lit. living soul): this is the soul which the supernal Earth brought forth from the "living creature" (*hayah*), which is the highest of all, to wit, the soul of the first man which formed in its midst. "That moveth": this is the "living creature" (*hayah*) that moves about on all sides above and below. "Which the waters brought forth abundantly", namely the waters of that supernal stream which issues from Eden and waters the Tree there that it may spread its roots and provide food for all. "And every winged fowl after its kind": these are the holy angels whose

function it is to sanctify the name of their Master every day, or to perform the messages of their Master in this world.' Said R. Judah: 'This is really too much for one so young to know, and I foresee that he will be removed to a place of eminence.' R. Isaac said: [40a] 'The "living creature that moveth" is the *Hayah* that is supreme above all, there being also another which is called by Scripture "earth". The expression here, "and let fowl multiply in the earth", means in the earth and not in the water, because the original stream flows on undivided up to that place which is called "earth" but from there, as it says, "it separates", etc. (Gen. II, 10); and the "fowl" mentioned are watered from this "earth".'

They then rose and went on their way, and R. Judah said: 'Let us take this youth into our company, and let each of us give some exposition of the Torah.' He then commenced with the verse: "Stay ye me with raisins, comfort me with apples", etc. (S.S. II, 5). He said: 'The Community of Israel speaks thus in exile. Support is needed by one who falls, and therefore the Community of Israel, of whom it is written, "she is fallen, she shall no more rise" (Amos V, 2), requires support, and she says, "Stay me". To whom does she say this? To her children who are in exile with her. And with what shall they support her? "With raisins": these are the "patriarchs", who are the first to be replenished with that good wine stored away from the Creation; and when they are replenished, blessings light upon her through the agency of a certain grade, namely the Righteous One, and so he who knows how to unify the Holy Name, even though blessings are not vouchsafed to the world, supports and stays the Community of Israel in exile. "Comfort me with apples": this is the same, and it also contains an inner meaning. Raisins intoxicate, but apples sober. Hence raisins to excite, and apples to see that the intoxication does not harm. And why all this? Because "I am sick of love" in the exile. He who unifies the Holy Name must fitly join Mercy with Justice, and this is what supports the Community of Israel in exile.'

R. Isaac took the verse: "Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices and drink the wine of their drink offering". He said: 'Happy are Israel in that they are holy, and God

desired to sanctify them. All the life of this world that they inherit is derived from the World-to-come, because that is life both above and below, and the place where the "treasured wine" commences, and from which life and holiness issue. And Israel use wine on account of the wine of another Israel, for the supernal Israel derives life therefrom, and therefore they bless the Holy One with wine. Hence, when the idolater, who is unclean and defiles anyone who associates with him, touches the wine of Israel it becomes unclean and is forbidden; all the more the wine which he himself makes. All the practices of Israel are on the supernal pattern, and especially their offering of wine, which holds a very high rank, like the "treasured wine". Hence Israel drink the wine of Israel which has been made in holiness, as is fitting, just as the Israel above drinks of that holy wine, and they do not drink wine which has been made in defilement and from the side of defilement, for the spirit of uncleanness rests on it, and if one drinks it his spirit is defiled and he is not of the side of Israel and has no share in the World-to-come, which is the "treasured wine". Hence God is blessed with wine above all, because wine rejoices the Left side and in that joy merges itself in the Right, and when the whole becomes Right the Holy Name is glad, and blessings are everywhere diffused.' [40b]

The youth then followed, taking as his text: "The king by judgement establisheth the land, but a man of offerings overthroweth it" (Prov. XXIX, 4). 'The king here', he said, 'is the Holy One, blessed be He. "Judgement" is Jacob, who is the epitome of the patriarchs. "A man of offerings" is Esau, who used to ask questions about offerings, but never bring any. Or again, I can say that 'offerings" is the negation of judgement, being the elevation of mercy, and therefore "a man of offerings overthroweth it". But was not David "a man of offerings", and yet the land was established by him? This was because it is written of him, "the sure mercies of David"; as he clung to one quality, so did he cling to the other. All his days David strove that this "offering" should be united with judgement. Solomon came and wedded them together, so that the moon became full and the land was

established. Zedekiah came and parted them, and the land was left without judgement, and the moon was impaired and the land was devastated. Note that oil was for the priests and wine for the Levites—not because they require wine, but from the "treasured wine" some comes to their side to link the whole together and make all worlds glad, right and left being found clasped together in them, so that they should be beloved of the true believers. Whoso concentrates his thought on this is perfect in this world and in the world to come, and all his days clings to repentance, the place where oil and wine are found. In this way he will not hanker after this world or its delights, for another kind of wealth is stored up for him, and he has a share in the future world, the place where oil and wine are stored. And he who loves this place does not require wealth or strive for it. Happy are the righteous who all their days strive after the celestial wealth of which it is written, "Gold and glass cannot equal it, neither shall the exchange thereof be jewels of fine gold" (Job XXVIII, 17).'

He further discoursed on the verse: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me, and I will give thee . . . the law and the commandment which I have written to teach them" (Ex. XXIV, 12). "The word *lehorotham* (to teach them) may be read *lehoratham* (to her that conceived them), the "them" referring to the law and the commandment. "She that conceived them" is the place of "treasured wine", because all writing of the Supernal Book commences there, and from thence issues the Torah which we call the Written Torah. The other Torah is called the Oral Torah (Torah of the mouth), the "mouth" being Knowledge which is the mouth of book and writing.

'It is written: "Take away the wicked from before the king and his throne shall be established in lovingkindness" (Prov.XXV, 3). When sinners are numerous in the world, the throne of the holy King is established in judgement and flames play around the world. But when the wicked are removed from the world, His throne is established in lovingkindness and not in judgement. This shows that the lower world depends on the higher, and the higher is disposed according

to the conduct of the lower. [41a] We further learn from this verse that when the priest enters the sanctuary he should enter with lovingkindness, of which the emblem is water, and not with wine, which is the emblem of severity.' R. Judah and R. Isaac then came and kissed his head, and from that day he never left R. Judah, and when he entered the House of Study, R. Judah used to rise before him, saying: 'I have learnt something from him, and it is fitting that I should show him respect.' Afterwards he became one of the Companions and they used to call him "R. Jesse the hammer-head that breaks rocks and makes the sparks fly in all directions", and R. Eleazar used to apply to him the verse: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee" (Jer. I, 4).

AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES AND TO AARON SAYING, THESE ARE THE LIVING THINGS WHICH YE SHALL EAT, ETC. Why was Aaron joined with Moses here? Because it was always his function to divide between the clean and the unclean. R. Abba expounded in this connection the verse: "What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days that he may see good?" (Ps. XXXIV, 13). 'Life here', he said, 'is the life which is called " the world to come", where true life abides. Similarly the "tree of life" means the tree that springs from that life and is planted therein. By "days" here is signified the name of the Holy King which is attached to the supernal days called "the days of the heaven over the earth". He who desires to have a portion in the higher life and to cleave to the supernal days should above all keep guard over his mouth and his tongue. He should preserve his mouth from food and drink which defile the soul and remove man from those supernal days and life, and he should keep his tongue from words of evil so as not to be defiled by them. Further, "mouth" and "tongue" are names given to supernal places, and therefore a man should be careful not to bring a stain on his mouth and tongue.'

THESE ARE THE LIVING THINGS WHICH YE SHALL EAT . . . AMONG ALL THE BEASTS. Why does it say first

"living things" and then "beasts"? What it means is that as long as Israel keep their souls from impurity, then they will eat "living things" so as to be of a high grade of holiness and cleave to God's Name through rejecting the "beasts" which are not selected as clean. But if they do not keep themselves from unclean food and drink, then they shall cleave to another unclean place and be defiled by it. The eating, however, of the animals selected will be clean and will not defile them nor deprive them of a share in God's Name. Again, we may lay stress on the word *zoth* (this) and interpret: *zoth* (i.e. the Shekinah) confronts you to punish you if you defile your souls, because your souls are from her, and therefore she stands before you for good or ill. R. Eleazar said: 'Of all the beasts that are attached to one side you may eat, and of all that do not come from that side you may not eat. For there are beasts that come [41*b*] from either side, and both sides have their signs. Hence, whoever eats of those that come from the unclean side defiles therewith himself and his soul, which comes from the side of purity.'

R. Simeon said: 'As there are ten Crowns of Faith above, so there are ten crowns of unclean sorcery below. All things on earth are attached either to one side or to the other. It may be asked, What of the goat in which dwells an unclean spirit, and is yet permitted? This is not really so, for if an unclean spirit dwelt in it, we should not be permitted to eat it. The fact is that the evil spirit passes through it and appears in front of it, but is not allowed to dwell in it. For when the evil spirit comes to take possession of it, another spirit passes by, and the evil spirit departs from it, though still appearing in front of it; and therefore it is not forbidden to us as food. Cattle, beasts, birds and fishes show signs of right or left, and whichever comes from the right we may eat and whichever comes from the left we may not eat, because an unclean spirit dwells in them; wherefore the holy spirit of Israel must not be mixed up with them, in order that they may remain holy and be recognized as such above and below. Happy is the portion of Israel in that the holy King delights in them and desires to sanctify and purify them above all others because they cling to Him. It is written, "Israel

in whom I am glorified" (Isa. XLIX, 3). If the Holy One, blessed be He, takes pride in Israel, how can they go and defile themselves and cling to the other, unclean side? Therefore it is written, "Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy, for I am holy"; he that is in the likeness of the king should not depart from the ways of the king. Happy the portion of Israel of whom it is written, "All that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. LXI, 9). Whoever eats of these unclean foods cleaves to the other side and defiles himself and shows that he has no portion in the most high God and comes not from His side, and if he departs in this state from this world he is seized by those who belong to the side of uncleanness, who punish him as a man spurned of his Master, and there is no healing to his defilement and he never escapes from it.' R. Jose said: 'King Solomon wrote in his wisdom: "All the labour of man is for his mouth" (Eccles. VI, 7). This signifies that all the punishment [42*a*] which a man undergoes in the other world is on account of his mouth, because he did not guard it and through it defiled his soul.' R. Isaac said: 'For one to defile himself with unclean foods is like serving idols; just as he who serves idols quits the side of life and of the domain of holiness for another domain, so likewise he who eats unclean foods is defiled both in this world and the next, for these were assigned to the idolatrous peoples, who are already unclean and come from the side of uncleanness.'

R. Eleazar once said to his father: 'We have learnt that God will one day purify Israel; with what?' He answered: 'With that which is mentioned in the verse, "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean" (Ezek. XXXVI, 25). And when they are purified they shall be sanctified and called holy, as it is written, "Holy is Israel to the Lord" (Jer. II, 3). Happy are Israel of whom God has said: "Ye shall be holy for I am holy", because it is written, "And to him ye shall cleave" (Deut. X, 20).'

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